Feasting in the Archaeology and Texts of the Bible and the Ancient Near East

Feasting
in the Archaeology and Texts of the Bible and the Ancient Near East

Edited by

Peter Altmann and Janling Fu

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Preface

The study of the feast, and of foodways more generally, has come into vogue.[1] The last 20 years have witnessed an explosion of interest in the feast in anthropological, archaeological, art-historical, and textual scholarship of the ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible. Studies have focused, for example, on the feast and foodways in identity construction, ethnogenesis, and the transformation of social polities and complex societies. The advance of scholarship has been swift, but its development along multiple axes has resulted in a lack of coherence.

One locus for the emergence of this scholarship has been the SBL consultation "Meals and the Hebrew Bible and Its World" and the related ASOR session "The Archaeology of Meals and the Hebrew Bible and Its World: Foodways." Many of the chapters in this volume were previously presented in these sessions and subsequently reworked for this publication. Others of these essays have come from individuals involved in the planning of these groups.

The volume is intended to be an introduction to and explication of this emerging field. Its essays address an array of topics and present a number of methodological approaches that explore the nature of feasting in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern texts, cultures, archaeology, and iconography. Put another way, feasting and foodways have functioned as a nexus for a number of different approaches, but the question of how these disparate bodies of knowledge might fit together deserves further discussion. Although this book does not fully untie this proverbial Gordion knot, we hope it demonstrates the value of thinking along diverse and interdisciplinary lines of investigation.

This collection would not have been possible without a veritable chorus of voices contributing insights and valuable support. We are thankful for numerous conversations that we have shared over the years with many individuals on these topics in formal and informal settings, including scholars and students who have presented papers

1. The term *foodways* indicates the larger framework of cultural values that revolves around the production, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food and, in our definition, the feast, more specifically.

with us. The steering committees of the SBL and ASOR meals and feasting groups in particular have offered a continual ground of support for this project and have also proven to be genial and knowledgeable interlocutors.

Nathan MacDonald initially brought many of us to the table, sometimes literally, to discuss matters of food and drink. Much of our collaborative endeavor since then has been generated by contact with him and through the generosity of his direction and advice. He has not only allowed others to continue to develop scholarly directions that he initiated; he has fostered the growth of a younger generation of scholars.

The guidance and support from Eisenbrauns throughout this process has been exemplary. Andrew Knapp encouraged us in the initial proposal and organization of the volume, and Beverly McCoy has lent a keen and unerring editing eye. We thank them both for their prompt, professional, and courteous interactions. This work is much better for their involvement.

Beyond this, our work necessarily bears the imprint of those who have taught and helped shape us as thinkers and scholars. We are grateful for their careful pruning and the example of their intellectual rigor and the standards of their scholarship, which are directly or indirectly reflected in this volume.

Finally, the foundation for this work is undoubtedly our families. We are grateful for their continued roles in our lives and our place at the table together with them.

—Peter Altmann and Janling Fu
August 2014

Abbreviations

General

Akk.	Akkadian
Aram.	Aramaic
BM	British Museum
CP	cooking pot
EA	Tell el-Amarna tablet
ED	Early Dynastic period
Heb.	Hebrew
J-CS	Jericho-casserole
LBA	Late Bronze Age
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	New Jewish Publication Society of America Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

Reference Works

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, D. N., et al., editors. *Anchor Bible Dictionary.* 6 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AIPHOS	*Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales (et Slaves)*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
ANET	Pritchard, J. B., editor. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* 3rd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARM	Archives royales de Mari: Textes cunéiformes
ARMT	Archives royales de Mari: Transcrite et traduite
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BThSt	Biblisch-theologische Studien
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	Oppenheim, A. L., et al., editors. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. 21 vols. (A–Z). Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2011

CAI	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Center for Archaeological Investigations
CAL	*Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*. http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/
CANE	Sasson, J., editor. *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 4 vols. New York: Scribner, 1995. Reprinted Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
COS	Hallo, W. W., editor. *The Context of Scripture*. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2003
CTA	Herdner, A., editor. *Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra–Ugarit de 1929 à 1939*. 2 vols. Mission de Ras Shamra 10. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963
ErIsr	*Eretz-Israel*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden, 1994–2000
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HR	*History of Religions*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
ITP	Tadmor, H. *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994
JAJ	*Journal of Ancient Judaism*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JHebS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
KAI	Donner, H., and W. Röllig. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1962–64
KTU	Dietrich, M., O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, J., editors. *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*. AOAT 24/1. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976. 2nd enlarged ed. of *KTU*: Dietrich, M., O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, editors. *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
MARI	*Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires*
MDOG	*Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NEAEHL	Stern, E., editor. *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Carta, 1993

NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NUS	Newsletter for Ugaritic Studies
OAAS	Old Assyrian Archives Studies
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OEANE	Meyers, E., editor. *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*. 5 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
Or n.s.	*Orientalia* new series
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
POLO	*Proche-Orient et Littérature Ougaritique*
QS	*Qaṭna Studien*
QSS	*Qaṭna Studien Supplementum*
RA	*Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale*
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
RIME	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods
RlA	Ebeling, E., et al., editors. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*. 13 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928–
RVO	Religionen des Vorderen Orients
SAHL	Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant
SANTAG	Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde
SAQ	Studi Archeologici su Qatna
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SMEA	*Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*
SSAA	Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TCL	Textes cunéiformes: Musée du Louvre
TDOT	Botterweck, G. J., and H. Ringgren, editors. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 15 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
TUAT n.s.	Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments new series
TWAT	Botterweck, G. J., and H. Ringgren, editors. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*. 10 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973–2000
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZBK	Zürcher Bibelkommentare

Feasting: Backgrounds, Theoretical Perspectives, and Introductions

Janling Fu and Peter Altmann

This opening essay begins by highlighting several emerging trends in this field of scholarship before presenting theoretical and methodological aspects important to the study of the feast and foodways. Building on this history of scholarship, we reflect on a definition in response to questions about what should be considered a *feast*. We will argue for an understanding that points to the significance of feasting for the study of social structures in ancient Israel and the wider context of the ancient Near East. As part of this discussion, we address methodological issues for identifying and categorizing feasts in ancient contexts. The theoretical portion then gives way to a short presentation showing how some of these theoretical aspects can be used to form a portrait of Solomon's hosting of feasts in 1 Kings 3 and 8. The article concludes with an overview of the remaining papers in the volume.

1. History of Scholarship

The study of the feast in the Levant dates back to the pioneering work of W. Robertson Smith in the late 1800s, who combined historical and anthropological methodologies in his study of the feasts of ancient Israel and Arabia. However, while W. Robertson Smith provided seminal reflections on feasting in ancient Israel,[1] his example was rarely followed in biblical or ancient Near Eastern studies.[2] In fact, the role of the feast in ancient Israelite and ancient Near

1. William Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: Black, 1889) 211–311.

2. For a few previous summaries of scholarship, see Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Peter Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel: Deuteronomy's Identity Politics in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context* (BZAW 424; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011); Jonathan S. Greer, *Dinner at Dan: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sacred Feasts at Iron Age II Tel Dan and Their Significance* (CHANE 66; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

Eastern societies received little sustained attention, though several important reflections on either the feast or more generally eating and drinking did arise from a handful of scholars.[3] A. Brenner and J. W. van Henten could still summarize this situation appropriately in 1999 by writing, "On food and drink, eating and drinking in the worlds of the Bible so-called, focused works are not to be found."[4]

The publication of Brenner and van Henten's edited volume of Semeia Studies in 1999—from which the preceding quotation was taken—was supposed to presage a significant transformation in biblical scholarship. Indeed, recent years have witnessed increased attention to food and drink, though much of this scholarship is only loosely related to the concerns of the Semeia volume.[5]

3. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966); idem, "Deciphering a Meal," *Daedelus* 101 (1972) 61–81; Rudolf Smend, "Essen und Trinken: Ein Stuck Weltlichkeit des Alten Testaments," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie* (ed. H. Donner, R. Hanhart, and R. Smend; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977) 446–59; Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926); Alan W. Jenks, "Eating and Drinking in the Old Testament," *ABD* 2:250–54; Gustaf Dalman, *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, vol. 4: *Brot, Öl und Wein* (8 vols.; Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 2/33; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1935).

4. Athalya Brenner and J. W. van Henten, "Our Menu and What Is Not On It: Editor's Introduction," in *Food and Drink in the Biblical Worlds* (ed. A. Brenner and J. W. van Henten; Semeia Studies 86; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999) ix–xvi (here, p. x). One exception to this rule is Eleonore Schmitt, *Das Essen in der Bibel: Literaturethnologische Aspekte des Alltäglichen* (Studien zur Kulturanthropologie 2; Münster: LIT, 1994). This volume addresses the subject quite rigidly through Goody's categories (see below).

5. Besides the work of Nathan MacDonald (*Not Bread Alone: What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008]), see also the recent works of Jonathan Greer on libations ("A *marzeāḥ* and a *mizrāq*: A Prophet's Melee with Religious Diversity in Amos 6:4–7," *JSOT* 32 [2010] 243–61), and then on faunal assemblage and feasting at Tel Dan (e.g., idem, "An Israelite *Mizrāq* at Tel Dan?" *BASOR* 358 [2010] 27–45; idem, *Dinner at Dan*), Cynthia Shafer-Elliott on domestic food preparation in the Iron II period (*Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible* [Bible World; Sheffield: Equinox, 2013]), Peter Altmann on Deuteronomic festive meals (*Festive Meals in Ancient Israel*), Carol L. Meyers on domestic meals and feasts ("Food and the First Family: A Socioeconomic Perspective," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* [ed. C. A. Evans, J. N. Lohr, and D. L. Petersen; Leiden: Brill, 2012] 137–57; idem, "The Function of Feasts: An Anthropological Perspective on Israelite Religious Festivals," in *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion: Essays in Retrospect and Prospect* [ed. S. M. Olyan; Resources for Biblical Study; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature,

Around the same time, however, a number of volumes on eating and drinking in the ancient Mediterranean offered original forays into the archaeological, iconographic, and textual data related to food. They showed that there was increased interest in the topic by those studying the broader ancient Near East as well.[6] Studies have proliferated, for example, on the controversial institution of the *marzēaḥ*,[7] with a number of other works more recently addressing the topic of ritualized eating and drinking at the city of Ugarit—a topic that has rightly drawn many parallels to biblical materials in the areas of language and myth.[8] Additional studies, many with

2012] 141–68), and Jacob L. Wright on the broad background to Nehemiah 5 ("Commensal Politics in Ancient Western Asia: The Background to Nehemiah's Feasting," *ZAW* 122 (2010) 212–31; 333–52). See also discussions of various agricultural and dietary elements in Carey E. Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (HSM 60; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000); idem, "Under the Influence: Trust and Risk in Biblical Family Drinking," *JSOT* 90 (2000) 13–29; and also Oded Borowski, "Eat, Drink and Be Merry: The Mediterranean Diet," *NEA* 67 (2004) 96–107; idem, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel: The Evidence from Archaeology and the Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987); and idem, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 1998).

6. Carlo Zaccagnini, ed., *Production and Consumption in the Ancient Near East* (Budapest: University of Budapest, 1989); Rika Gyselen, ed., *Banquets d'orient* (Res Orientales 4; Leuven: Peeters, 1992); Lucio Milano, ed., *Drinking in Ancient Societies—History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East: Papers of a Symposium Held in Rome, May 17–19, 1990* (History of the Ancient Near East Studies 6; Padua: Sargon, 1994); Cristiano Grottanelli and Lucio Milano, eds., *Food and Identity in the Ancient World* (Padua: Sargon, 2004).

7. The *marzēaḥ* has been variously thought to be similar to a symposium (as in the Ugaritic materials) although the biblical references—especially Jer 16:5–9 (less so Amos 6:7)—relate this word to funeral occasions. Note that in Jer 16:5–9 the *bêt mišteh* ("house of feasting") and *bêt marzēaḥ* ("house of *marzēaḥ*") may be equated and thus translated "house of funeral feasting" as in W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1–25* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 470–71; compare with the current standard work, John L. McLaughlin, *The* Marzēah *in the Prophetic Literature: References and Allusions in Light of Extra-Biblical Evidence* (VTSup 86; Leiden: Brill, 2001), though there are many others.

8. David P. Wright, *Ritual in Narrative: The Dynamics of Feasting, Mourning and Retaliation Rites in the Ugaritic Tale of Aqhat* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001); Mark S. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23: Royal Constructions of Opposition, Intersection, Integration, and Domination* (SBLRBS 51; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006); Dan Belnap, *Fillets of Fatling and Goblets of Gold: The Use of Meal Events in the Ritual Imagery in the Ugaritic Mythological and Epic Texts* (Gorgias Ugaritic Studies 4; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008).

cross-cultural concerns, have explored the use of alcohol, especially wine.[9] For instance, P. McGovern, who specializes in detecting trace elements of alcohol, focuses attention on the origins and trade of wine throughout the ancient Near East and eastern Mediterranean.[10] Considerable attention has also centered on Syria and, to a lesser extent, on Mesopotamia. Their objects of study have broadened to take various social and political implications of feasting into consideration.[11] As a whole, the studies begin to highlight the broad reach of feasting and foodways in these ancient societies.

Study of the classical world has witnessed a nearly concurrent focus on issues related to drinking, the feast, and banqueting. Great stimulus was given to the study of food and drink by the work of

9. See, e.g., Alexander Joffe, "Alcohol and Social Complexity in Ancient Western Asia," *Current Anthropology* 39 (1998) 297–322.

10. Patrick E. McGovern, Stuart J. Fleming, and Solomon H. Katz, eds., *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine* (London: Routledge, 1996); Patrick E. McGovern, *Ancient Wine: The Search for the Origins of Viniculture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); idem, Armen Mirzoian, and Gretchen R. Hall, "Ancient Egyptian Herbal Wines," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106 (2009) 7361–66. For additional consideration of the feast with respect to Egypt, see Lyn Green, "Some Thoughts on Ritual Banquets at the Court of Akhenaten and in the Ancient Near East," in *Egypt, Israel, and the Ancient Mediterranean World: Studies in Honor of Donald B. Redford* (ed. G. N. Knoppers and A. Hirsch; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 203–22; Heidi Jauhiainen, *'Do Not Celebrate Your Feast without Your Neighbours': A Study of References to Feasts and Festivals in Non-Literary Documents from Ramesside Period Deir el-Medina* (Ph.D. diss., University of Helsinki, 2009).

11. In addition to the essays to be found in McGovern, Fleming, and Katz, eds., *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine*, see Denise Schmandt-Besserat, "Feasting in the Ancient Near East," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2001) 391–403; and Susan Pollock, "Feasts, Funerals, and Fast Food in Early Mesopotamian States," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 17–38. For Northern Syria, see, e.g., Jack M. Sasson, "The Calendar and Festivals of Mari during the Reign of Zimri-Lim," in *Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones* (ed. M. A. Powell and R. H. Sack; AOAT 203; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neuckirchener Verlag) 119–41; Eudora J. Struble and Virginia R. Herrmann, "An Eternal Feast at Sam'al: The New Iron Age Mortuary Stele from Zincirli in Context," *BASOR* 356 (2009) 15–49; Alessandra Gilibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance: The Stone Reliefs at Carchemish and Zincirli in the Earlier First Millennium* BCE (Topoi Berlin Studies of the Ancient World 2; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011); ibid., "Archaeologie der Menschenmenge: Platzanlage, Bildwerke und Fest im syro-hethitischen Stadtgefüge," in *Bild-Raum-Handlung: Perspektiven der Archäologie* (ed. O. Dally, S. Moraw, and H. Ziemssen; Berlin: de Gruyter) 107–36.

O. Murray, who emphasizes the importance of the Greek symposion and the sympotic tradition. A series of volumes, resulting both directly and indirectly from Murray's stimulus, is devoted to the exploration of this theme.[12] That these volumes were not the first forays into conceptualizing the banquet is clear from the work of J.-M. Dentzer and F. Lissarrague, for instance.[13] But a renewed emphasis was placed on sympotic studies at this time that has continued to yield significant advances.[14]

A second focus of study has centered on Aegean prehistory and the banqueting practices of the Minoan and Mycenaean world. A key stimulus to the study of Aegean feasting has been the work of J. C. Wright.[15] As he notes, a significant body of evidence for the feast can be established on the basis of pottery and artifactual assemblage, faunal remains, texts, and frescoes.[16] This focus on the material culture of the feast was also stimulated by the work of Dietler and Hayden (see discussion below) and remains a fruitful avenue of research.[17]

12. See, e.g., Oswyn Murray, *Early Greece* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980) 192–208; idem, ed., *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); William J. Slater, ed., *Dining in a Classical Context* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1991); Oswyn Murray and Manuela Tecusan, eds., *In Vino Veritas* (London: British School at Rome and American Academy at Rome, 1995).

13. Jean-Marie Dentzer, *Le motif du banquet couché dans le proche-orient et le monde grec du VIIe au IVe siècle avant J.-C.* (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 246; Paris: École de française de Rome, 1982); François Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet: Images of Wine and Ritual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

14. For more recent work on the *symposion*, see, e.g., Kathryn Topper, *The Imagery of the Athenian Symposium* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); for the recent discovery of a sympotic assemblage, see Kathleen M. Lynch, *The Symposium in Context: Pottery from a Late Archaic House near the Athenian Agora* (Hesperia Supplement 46; Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2011); for the possible relationship of the *symposion* to the *marzēaḥ*, see Jane B. Carter, "Ancestor Cult and the Occasion of Homeric Performance," in *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule* (ed. J. B. Carter and S. P. Morris; Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995) 285–312.

15. James C. Wright, ed., *Hesperia* 73 (*The Mycenaean Feast*; 2004).

16. Idem, "A Survey of Evidence for Feasting in Mycenaean Society," *Hesperia* 73 (2004) 133–78. The textual material is to be seen in Linear B documents, particularly from Pylos. See, e.g., Thomas G. Palaima, "Sacrificial Feasting in the Linear B Documents," *Hesperia* 73 (2004) 217–46.

17. See more recently the essays in Louise A. Hitchcock, Robert Laffineur, and Janice Crowley, eds., *Dais—The Aegean Feast: Proceedings of the 12th International Aegean Conference/12e Rencontre égéene internationale, Melbourne, Centre for*

Here, consideration of the wider Mediterranean world that is attested in the Late Bronze Age Amarna letters, the implications of which may be seen as an international *koiné* of material culture,[18] has led naturally to points of connection. Levantine archaeologists, in interaction with work in the related area of Mycenaean Greece, have steadily produced a series of studies focused on feasting and drinking. Perhaps it should not be surprising that many of these studies focus on Philistia, in terms of both the problem of the relation of Philistia to the Aegean world and the transition between the Late Bronze and early Iron Age in the Levant.[19] These studies logically place feasting near the heart of questions of cultural connectivity and diffusion with regard to ethnicity and identity.

Classics and Archaeology, 25–29 March 2008 (Aegeum 29; Liège: Université de Liège / Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 2008); as well as, e.g., Joseph Maran, "Ceremonial Feasting Equipment, Social Space and Interculturality in Post-Palatial Tiryns," in *Materiality and Social Practice: Transformative Capacities of Intercultural Encounters* (ed. J. Maran and P. W. Stockhammer; Oxford: Oxbow, 2012) 121–36.

18. Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an 'International Style' in the Ancient Near East, 1400–1200* BCE (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

19. For Philistia, see, e.g., Assaf Yasur-Landau, "Old Wine in New Vessels: Intercultural Contact, Innovation and Aegean, Canaanite and Philistine Foodways." *TA* 32 (2005) 168–91; ibid., "Hard to Handle: Aspects of Organization in Aegean and Near Eastern Feasts," in *Dais—The Aegean Feast: Proceedings of the 12th International Aegean Conference/12e Rencontre égéene international: University of Melbourne, Centre for Classics and Archaeology, 25–29 March 2008* (ed. L. A. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, and J. Crowley; Liège: Université de Liège / Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 2008) 353–59; Anne E. Killebrew and Justin Lev-Tov, "Early Iron Age Feasting and Cuisine: An Indicator of Philistine-Aegean Connectivity?" in ibid., 339–46; David Ben-Shlomo et al., "Cooking Identities: Aegean-Style Cooking Jugs and Cultural Interaction in Iron Age Philistia and Neighboring Regions," *AJA* 112 (2008) 225–46; Laura B. Mazow, *Competing Material Culture: Philistine Settlement at Tel Miqne–Ekron in the Early Iron Age* (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 2005). For the Late Bronze Age Levant outside Philistia, see Sharon Zuckerman, "'. . . Slaying Oxen and Killing Sheep, Eating Flesh and Drinking Wine . . .': Feasting in Late Bronze Age Hazor," *PEQ* 139 (2007) 186–204; Justin Lev-Tov and Kevin McGeough, "Examining Feasting in Late Bronze Age Syro-Palestine through Ancient Texts and Bones," in *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (ed. K. C. Twiss; Occasional Paper 34; Carbondale, IL: Center for Archaeological Investigations, 2007) 85–111. For Iron Age Jordan, see Benjamin W. Porter, "Feeding the Community: Objects, Scarcity and Commensality in the Early Iron Age Southern Levant," *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 24 (2011) 27–54.

A final area that has blossomed in the past decades in Levantine and classical archaeology is zooarchaeology—that is, the study of animal bones.[20] Given the centrality of meat on the festive menu in ancient times, the locations of animal bone remains and their relative density in various contexts offer feasting studies another route to the investigation of these events.

As this burgeoning and incomplete list attests, perspectives on feasting have proliferated, yet much work remains to be done in developing a deeper understanding of the nature and pluriform roles of foodways and feasting in the ancient Mediterranean. The range of studies and issues relating to feasting is broad, resulting in the need to draw these various discourses together. This gathering of the various regional and methodological foci together could provide an opportunity for scholarly advancement.

Similarly needed in building a more synthetic approach is the inclusion of studies from an iconographic perspective. The early history of banquet iconography in the ancient Near East stretches back at least to the Early Dynastic period of the early third millennium B.C.E. in Mesopotamia,[21] and many of the motifs of this period

20. See, for example, Paula Wapnish, "Archaeozoology: The Integration of Faunal Data with Biblical Archaeology," in *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, June–July 1990* (ed. A. Biran and J. Aviram; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993) 426–42; idem, "Is *ṣēnī ana lā māni* an Accurate Description or a Royal Boast?" in *Retrieving the Past: Essays on Archaeological Research and Methodology in Honor of Gus W. Van Beek* (ed. J. D. Seger; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 285–96; idem and Brian Hesse, "Faunal Remains from Tel Dan: Perspectives on Animal Production at a Village, Urban, and Ritual Center," *Archaeozoologia* 4 (1991) 9–86; Gunnel Ekroth, "Meat in Ancient Greece: Sacrificial, Sacred, or Secular?" *Food and History* 5 (2007) 249–72.

21. Dominique Collon, "Banquets in the Art of the Ancient Near East," in *Banquets d'Orients* (ed. R. Gyselen, Leuven: Peeters, 1992) 23–30; Frances Pinnock, "Considerations on the 'Banquet Theme' in the Figurative Art of Mesopotamia and Syria," in *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East* (ed. L. Milano; History of the Ancient Near East Studies 6; Padua: Sargon, 1994), 15–26; Irit Ziffer, "Symbols of Royalty in Canaanite Art in the Third and Second Millennia B.C.E.," *Bulletin of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo* 25 (2002) 11–20; idem, "From Acemhöyük to Megiddo: The Banquet Scene in the Art of the Levant in the Second Millennium BCE," *TA* (2005) 133–67; Pierre Villard, "Les commensaux des rois néo-assyriens," in *Le Banquet du Monarque dans le Monde Antique* (ed. C. Grandjean, C. Hugoniot, and B. Lion; Table des hommes; Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013) 215–30; Irene Winter, "Le banquets royal assyrien: Mise en œuvre de la rhétorique de l'abondance," in ibid., 287–309.

reappear in the Levant—though one may question whether the uses and meanings remained stable across time and geography.[22] To general depictions of the banquet should be added works discussing individual objects or classes of objects that may illuminate aspects of the production or consumption of feasting.[23] These studies continue to appear, and they have also begun to address ways that the broad array of data can be woven together.[24]

Cultural anthropological concerns have played a seminal role in new research on feasting in biblical studies. The work of N. MacDonald, which itself builds on a renewed discussion of Douglas's understanding of eating and drinking, advances the state of the field by returning attention to anthropological theory, the perspective introduced by W. Robertson Smith that fell out of vogue. In two volumes, MacDonald shows how feasts play an influential role in a significant number of discussions. His investigation of food and nutrition in the biblical period introduces a necessary level of complexity to reflections on the issues of diet that provides a backdrop for understanding depictions of feasting.[25] In the second volume,

22. In this volume, S. Renette argues for a diversity of meanings.

23. See, e.g., Harold Liebowitz, "Military and Feast Scenes on Late Bronze Palestinian Ivories," *IEJ* 30 (1980) 162–69; P. R. S. Moorey, "Metal Wine Sets in the Ancient Near East," *Iranica Antiqua* 15 (1980) 181–97; Irene J. Winter, "North Syria as a Bronzeworking Centre in the Early First Millennium BC: Luxury Commodities at Home and Abroad," in *Bronzeworking Centres of Western Asia c. 1000–539 B.C.* (ed. J. Curtis; London: Kegan Paul, 1988) 193–225; David Stronach, "The Imagery of the Wine Bowl: Wine in Assyria in the Early First Millennium B.C.," in *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine* (ed. P. E. McGovern, S. J. Fleming, and S. H. Katz; London: Routledge, 1996) 175–96; Yardenna Alexandre, "A Fluted Bronze Bowl with a Canaanite–Early Phoenician Inscription from Kefar Veradim," in *Eretz Zafon: Studies in Galilean Archaeology* (ed. Z. Gal; Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2002) 64–74; ibid., "A Canaanite–Early Phoenician Inscribed Bronze Bowl in an Iron Age IIA–B Burial Cave at Kefar Veradim, Northern Israel," *Maarav* 13 (2006) 7–41; Shlomo Bunimovitz and Raphael Greenberg, "Revealed in Their Cups: Syrian Drinking Customs in Intermediate Bronze Age Canaan," *BASOR* 334 (2004) 19–31; Greer, "An Israelite *Mizrāq* at Tel Dan?"; Aaron Koller, "The *Kos* in the Levant: Thoughts on Its Distribution, Function, and Spread from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age II," in *The Ancient Near East in the 12th–10th Centuries BCE—Culture and History: Proceedings of the International Conference Held at the University of Haifa, 2–5 May 2010* (ed. G. Galil et al.; AOAT 392; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012) 269–90.

24. See, for example, Catherine Grandjean, Christophe Hugoniot, and Brigitte Lion, eds., *Le Banquet du Monarque dans le Monde Antique* (Table des hommes; Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013).

25. MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*

after dealing with the feast and its theory, he shows the importance of feasting and foodways in such broad arenas as the rise of the monarchy, memory in Deuteronomy, the motif of judgment, literary motifs in the book of Judges, and Israelite identity in the postexilic period.[26] The last several years have witnessed continued growth in the number of studies that have branched out from the directions represented in MacDonald's work, without implying that all these publications have grown out of his investigations.[27] At the same time, his treatment has provided an important model for the material covered, and much of the work in this volume has been stimulated by and expands on his earlier studies.

This comparatively brief survey of the history of scholarship shows a developing awareness of the role played by feasting and foodways in various disciplines that study the ancient world. It also illustrates a need for further attention to the multifaceted theoretical and methodological issues involved in this research. The disparate strands of text, iconography, archaeology, and anthropology require significant clarification in order to investigate feasting as a whole in biblical texts, historical Israel and Judah, and the broader ancient Near East. As a first step, in the next section we address definitions in understanding the feast as prompted by recent work in anthropology.

2. Theoretical Perspectives: Anthropological Theory and an "Archaeological Signature"[28]

A. Anthropological Foundations and Definitions of "Feasting"

Scholars from various theoretical and methodological perspectives—from anthropology and archaeology, for instance—have identified the feast and foodways as constitutive elements in the

26. Idem, *Not Bread Alone*.

27. Representative are Michaela Geiger, Christl M. Maier, and Uta Schmidt, eds., *Essen und Trinken in der Bibel: Ein literarisches Festmahl für Rainer Kessler zum 65. Geburtstag* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 2009); Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*; Timothy J. Stone, "Six Measures of Barley: Seed Symbolism in Ruth," *JSOT* 38 (2013) 189–99; Peter Altmann, "Feast, Famine, and History," *ZAW* 124 (2012) 555–67; Stephen B. Chapman, "Food, Famine, and the Nations: A Canonical Approach to Genesis," in *Genesis and Christian Theology* (ed. N. MacDonald, M. Elliott, and G. Macaskill; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012) 323–33; Christopher Mark Tuckett, ed., *Feasts and Festivals* (CBET 53; Leuven: Peeters, 2009).

28. The notion of an archaeological signature picks up on "material signatures" of feasting identified by Katheryn C. Twiss, "Transformations in an Early

construction of community, in the production of social roles, and in the development and maintenance of the state.[29]

Anthropological studies often point to the works of M. Douglas and J. Goody as turning points in the field that demonstrate the attention paid to the key social and cultural role played by food and drink, rather than merely the biological role.[30] Stated simply, rather than devoting primary concern to the number of calories consumed, food studies came to include—or even highlight—the sociocultural, power, and other identity-related dynamics involved in foodways.[31]

A second notable scholar who builds on the cultural anthropological perspectives of Douglas, Goody, and others, especially in adding an archaeological perspective, is the anthropologist M. Dietler. First in a 1990 article and then in subsequent contributions, he argues for the importance of feasting in social formation, outlining a methodology for studying feasting in the material record. In particular, he points out the ritual and ideological aspects that may underlie the production and performance of the feast.[32] These studies together

Agricultural Society: Feasting in the Southern Levantine Pre-Pottery Neolithic," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 27 (2008) 418–42 (here, p. 419).

29. For studies of food and social and cultural history, see M. Parker Pearson, "Food, Identity and Culture: An Introduction and Overview," in *Food, Culture and Identity in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age* (ed. M. P. Pearson; BAR International Series 117; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003) 1–30 (esp. p. 1 n. 1) in addition to the bibliography. For a broader-based review of the study of feasting over the past century, see Brian Hayden and Suzanne Villeneuve, "A Century of Feasting Studies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011) 433–49 and the bibliography listed there.

30. For Douglas, see *Purity and Danger* and "Deciphering a Meal"; and the contributions of C. Shafer-Elliott and L. Pace in this volume; Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Themes in the Social Sciences; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Their structuralist-oriented scholarship continues a longer tradition of social-cultural anthropology found in Bronislaw Malinowski, Audrey Richards, and Raymond Firth. For a discussion of Goody's work, see Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel*, 46–48.

31. Within biblical studies, the one classic problematic of food and identity that has continually remained part of scholarly discussion is the question of food prohibitions.

32. See, e.g., Michael Dietler, "Driven by Drink: The Role of Drinking in the Political Economy and the Case of Early Iron Age France," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 9 (1990) 352–406; idem, "Feasts and the Commensal Politics in the Political Economy: Food, Power, and Status in Prehistoric Europe," in *Food and the Status Quest: an Interdisciplinary Perspective* (ed. P. Wiessner and W. Schiefenhövel; Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1996) 87–125; idem, "Theorizing the Feast: Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics, and Power in African

with the work of other scholars have made significant advances in illuminating the meaning and repercussions of the feast as well as the archaeological identification of the feast.[33]

Building on these perspectives, we contend that understanding the nature of a feast requires both universal (etic) categories from anthropology, which provide a comparative framework, and internal or native (emic) perspectives from ancient Israel and the broader Near East.[34] These two perspecitves set appropriate but elastic boundaries on our study of ancient feasts in literature, iconography, and the material record.[35]

The identification of a feast is a prerequisite before the next logical step, which is to investigate what feasts "do" in the general (thus

Contexts," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Smithsonian Series In Archaeological Inquiry; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 65–114; idem, "Clearing the Table: Some Concluding Reflections on Commensal Politics and Imperial States," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 271–82. Some of Dietler's more recent work focuses on the issue of colonialism, although the rubric of consumption is still central to it. See idem, "The Archaeology of Colonization and the Colonization of Archaeology: Theoretical Challenges from an Ancient Mediterranean Colonial Encounter," in *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters* (ed. G. J. Stein; School of Advanced Research Advanced Seminar Series; Santa Fe: School of American Research Press / Oxford: James Currey, 2005) 33–68 (here, pp. 63–68).

33. See, in addition, the edited volume of Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (Smithsonian Series In Archaeological Inquiry; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001); Tamara L. Bray, ed., *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003); Katheryn C. Twiss, ed., *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (Occasional Paper 34; Carbondale, IL: Center for Archaeological Investigations, 2007); idem, "Transformations in an Early Agricultural Society."

34. This shared emphasis on the *emic* is one reason that we ultimately reject the approach taken by Brian Hayden (see, e.g., "Funerals as Feasts: Why Are They So Important?" *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 19 [2009] 29–52), which tends to reduce the meaningful insights to a "deep structure" seen by the ethnologist. However, this is not to assume that emic perspectives provide sufficient explanation; note Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (trans. R. Nice; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 19–22.

35. For some sense of this tension, we might point to the "thick description" offered by Clifford Geertz, who takes a medial position between emic and etic perspectives. For a well-known example of this methodology, see his "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 412–53.

etic) sense. We suggest that, fundamentally, feasts function to bond people together within the broader rubric of commensality.[36]

However, feasts (or festive commensality) are not *merely* events that gather people together: such a statement would border on the tautological. In fact, the current range of definitions among social theorists who study the feast varies so greatly that it is almost axiomatic that the number of definitions matches the number of scholars who study feasting.[37] Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden's oft-consulted volume of essays devoted to the feast represents a case in point. The editors openly admit to the varied nature of the definitions offered by the volume's contributors.[38] It is, indeed, a truism that the word *feast* becomes applied to every possible situation and consequently is so amorphous as to lack any significant boundaries at all.[39] Thus, Hayden, for one, defines feasting in general terms as

36. For one formulation of this perspective, itself something of a truism, see Eugene N. Anderson, *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2005) 125. See also the contribution by L. Pace in this volume.

37. For instance, Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, "Digesting the Feast: Good to Eat, Good to Drink, Good to Think: An Introduction," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Smithsonian Series in Archaeological Inquiry; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 1–20 (here, p. 4), who in fact suggest that multiple classifications may be beneficial because "classificatory reification is generally the enemy of understanding." They doubt that a uniform typology will develop.

38. For a survey of different definitions, see, e.g., Polly Wiessner, "Of Feasting Value: Enga Feasts in a Historical Perspective (Papua New Guinea)," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power*, 115–43 (here, p. 116); Michael J. Clarke, "Akha Feasting: An Ethnoarchaeological Perspective," in ibid., 144–67 (here, p. 145); Patrick V. Kirch, "Polynesian Feasting in Ethnohistoric, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Contexts: A Comparison of Three Societies," in ibid., 168–84 (here, p. 169); and James R. Perodie, "Feasting for Prosperity: A Study of Southern Northwest Coast Feasting," in ibid., 185–214 (here, p. 190). Katheryn Twiss also acknowledges this imprecision regarding feasting and its differentiation from ordinary meals (*The Archaeology of Food and Identity*, 51).

39. For instance, Walter R. DeBoer, "The Big Drink: Feast and Forum in the Upper Amazon," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Smithsonian Series in Archaeological Inquiry; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 215–39 (here, p. 215), writes of the "protean character" of feasts as a "delightfully ambiguous category, one whose members are linked by faint resemblances but otherwise lack common properties." Brian Hesse (personal communication, 11/1/09) asked, for instance, what the difference would be between the remains from an army mess hall and those of a feast?

"any sharing between two or more people of special foods (that is, foods not generally served at daily meals) in a meal for a specific purpose or occasion."[40] Hayden's understanding of feasting is, at the least, that it includes more than one individual and is special in some sense. He does not address possible ritual qualifications. However, his definition—like all definitions—is influenced by the analytical framework through which he approaches his subject: he presupposes that feasts are a means to turn food surpluses into other sorts of advantage. He therefore pays close attention to the nature of this process and its resulting advantages, and then interprets in this direction. Nevertheless, or understandably, his definition of feasting has come under criticism for being overly broad.[41]

An approach that we find to be more congenial to the study of the complex societies investigated by this volume has been presented by Dietler. He agrees with Hayden on the inherently political nature of feasting, arguing that feasting is a central social practice, one in which "the micropolitics of daily life are played out."[42] By defining the feast in terms of politics, Dietler conveys the heart of his interest in the subject, what he terms "commensal politics"—or the use of eating and drinking together to negotiate the dynamics of power. Because feasts are "inherently political,"[43] they comprise important means by which individuals aggrandize power. Dietler's definition of a feast follows as "a form of public ritual activity centered around the communal consumption of food and drink."[44] This emphasis on the ritualized nature of feasting—which stands in relative contrast to Hayden's understanding—is helpful in explaining feasts in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East. They are repeated practices

40. Brian Hayden, "Fabulous Feasts: A Prolegomenon to the Importance of Feasting," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power*, 23–64 (here, p. 28). In this essay, he does go on to provide a list of features (pp. 35–36: inter alia, inferred functions, size, and goals of creating social bonds versus achievement of more-immediate limited objectives) that help classify feasts in various categories.

41. Hayden considers the cultural-political-approaches category of "social capital" to be overblown, so he develops an evolutionist-biological metaphor for feasting, terming it a "political ecological" approach that views feasting similarly to a peacock's feathers or a deer's antlers (ibid., 27; idem, "Funerals as Feasts"). A number of critiques of his perspective are also included in ibid., 42–47.

42. Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast," 66.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 67.

with inherently symbolic elements, whereby the symbols evidence meaning that cannot be easily articulated in words.

Although one might quibble with the extent of the *public* nature of feasting,[45] as Dietler puts it, these feasts are "the practices by which individuals [or groups] create, maintain, and contest positions of power and authority within systems structured in these ways and, in the pursuit of their conflicting interests, transform the structures of the system themselves."[46] These episodes of commensality, therefore, do have "public" ramifications, even when carried out in private. This view of feasting highlights the essential nature of recurring feasts that appear throughout the fabric of social polities of the ancient Near East and not merely when someone was seeking to establish a state-like regime.[47] Feasting was not only important for the establishment of a political regime; the practice was part of its maintenance but also a possible means for its change or even overthrow.[48]

A second important feature of Dietler's definition is the centrality of its social setting.[49] This observation pertains to biblical texts, ancient Israelite and Judahite practice, and the wider ancient Near East as well. A mere glance at the feasting events in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern texts, archaeology, and iconography

45. Note the location of the household feasting in dwelling F7 at Tell Halif posited by C. Shafer-Elliott, this volume. The "public" nature of feasting can be evidenced by an element of performance, as illustrated by Barbara Mills, "Performing the Feast: Visual Display and Suprahousehold Commensalism in the American Southwest," *American Antiquity* 72 (2007) 210–39.

46. Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast," 66.

47. In this sense, feasts can be viewed as part of what might be called a "materialization of ideology," that is, bringing ideology into the physical world. See Elizabeth DeMarrais, Luis J. Castillo, and Timothy K. Earle, "Ideology, Materialization and Power Strategies," *Current Anthropology* 37 (1996) 15–32 (here, p. 16). Takeshi Inomata and Lawrence S. Coben similarly emphasize this point in "Overture: An Invitation to the Archaeological Theater," in *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics* (ed. T. Inomata and L. S. Coben; Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2006) 11–44 (here p. 11).

48. The ongoing instability inherent in feasting is portrayed by the rival festival that is established by Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 12:26–33 to maintain his authority over the Northern Kingdom of Israel by causing the people of this region to stop having their ritual feasts (*lăʿaśôt zibḥîm*) in Jerusalem (v. 27) but instead to go to the houses (temples) he sets up for ritual feasting in Bethel and Dan.

49. Dietler's work centers primarily on Gaul and African contexts. The wide cultural, geographical, and chronological scope affords some weight to the theory that mechanisms and the operation of the feast are valid across some cultural settings. Dietler also divides the feast into various categories; see below.

points to the prominent role played by leading political figures at feasts in the respective realms. The contributions included in the remainder of this volume bear out this contention, almost to the point of rendering it a truism. Dietler formulates the reasons for this central position of the feast with regard to its nature as part of a Maussian gift-giving matrix.[50] He notes that food and drink are special sorts of gifts, however, because they are necessarily destroyed when being received. That is, they cannot be re-given, at least until other agricultural material is raised and produced. They are literally consumed, unlike jewelry, and thus the receiver incurs an embodied debt.[51] However, feasts play central roles, not only in grand matters of state, but also in upholding and transforming the diverse structures of households and clans.[52] These questions of societal, political, and religious negotiation are also central to studies of recurring seasonal feasts, such as the Passover in the Hebrew Bible, the *akītu* in Mesopotamia, and the *zukru* in second-millennium Emar.[53]

Using these discussions as a basis, we offer a definition of our own. A *feast*, then, is a central social event oriented toward abundant display and communal consumption with ritualizing tendencies. As localized in specific spaces and times, feasting differs in degree and kind from the daily intake of meals, though it overlaps with the quotidian routines of consumption.[54] In addition, the focus

50. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (trans. I. Cunnison; London: Cohen and West, 1966).

51. Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast," 73–74. We should highlight that an additional component of Dietler's theory, the use of work feasts, during which a community gathers together to do work and is provided with a feast (pp. 79–80), seems less in evidence in the ancient Near East. For a fuller statement of this idea, see Michael Dietler and Ingrid Herbich, "Feasts and Labor Mobilization: Dissecting a Fundamental Economic Practice," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Smithsonian Series in Archaeological Inquiry; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 240–64.

52. Note the discussion of this dynamic in Shafer-Elliott, in this volume; and in Meyers, "The Function of Feasts," 149–51.

53. Cf. Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel*.

54. Cf. Massimo Montanari, *Food Is Culture* (trans. A. Sonnenfeld; Arts and Traditions of the Table; New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) 37. Note the similar definition in Twiss, "Transformations in an Early Agricultural Society," 418; also idem, "The Complexities of Home Cooking: Public Feasts and Private Meals inside the Çatalhöyük House," *eTopoi Journal for Ancient Studies* Special Volume 2 (*Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Toward an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces*; 2012) 53–73.

on communal consumption sets feasting apart from individual consumption of food. Our use of the term *ritualizing* builds on Bell's understanding that acts can lie along an axis of varying degrees of ritual.[55] Potentially useful in identifying a feast in the cultures addressed in this volume are the elements of food and drink (chiefly alcohol and rare foods such as meat), furniture, location, particular vessel types and their frequency of appearance, music, and dance, which might be used to heighten the feast's ritualizing character. Or, taking a cue from structural linguistics, a feast stands out as *marked* in its time and place; that is, it has characteristics that set it apart from the differently marked, normal, everyday meals.[56]

55. Catherine Bell uses the term "ritualization" as "a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian activities. As such, ritualization is a matter of various culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others" (*Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1992] 74). She further compares the difference between a regular meal and the Christian Eucharist and points out the contingent nature of elements that ritualize the meal. She writes,

> It is important to note that the features of formality, fixity, and repetition are not intrinsic to this ritualization or to ritual in general. Theoretically, ritualization of the meal could employ a different set of strategies to differentiate it from conventional eating, such as holding the meal only once in a person's lifetime or with too much food for normal nourishment. The choice of strategies would depend in part on which ones could most effectively render the meal symbolically dominant to its conventional counterparts. (ibid., 90)

If Bell is right in this assertion, attempts to discern emic valuations of the feast in its ritualization become of greater importance as cultural constraints become determinative in distinguishing what is a feast and what is an ordinary meal in a particular cultural setting. Elsewhere she also stresses the importance of the "particular" that is sometimes lost in discussions of the "universal" (p. 70). As we hope to point out, increased "markedness" as seen in, for example, the presence of dancing and music reveals heightened levels of ritual and, by extension, a greater need for proper performance. This element of music and dancing also coincides with feasting events in the biblical and ancient Near Eastern sources.

56. L. Pace presents a similar understanding of the feast and compares it with quotidian meals, in this volume. The essential overlap between the two was discussed early on by Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal"; the comparison with linguistics comes from Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast," 66. We prefer to use the distinction "differently marked" rather than "unmarked," however, recognizing that some sort of "ideal" or "basic" meal does not and did not exist. Twiss concludes that there is a difference in the archaeological footprint left by quotidian meals and festive meals inside the Çatalhöyük house: "However, domestic food stores and feast food remains were spatially segregated within the household: one kept secluded, the other on display" ("The Complexities of Home Cook-

We might note, however, that the interplay with everyday eating also points *beyond* the special feast itself, necessarily broadening the discussion to foodways as a whole. Without suggesting that "feasting" as a practice and as a written *topos* incorporates the entirety (or is the dominating feature) of ancient Near Eastern societies and texts, we do imply its centrality with regard to negotiating political-social formation on multiple levels of society and its permeation of social interactions. For example, feasting demanded certain practices of production and therefore influenced ancient economies.

B. The Habitus as a Vehicle to Understanding Feasting

Another way that feasting can be understood as a central social practice can be highlighted. As Dietler notes, during the development of a theoretical framework for feasting and its importance in the construction of social order, a heavy emphasis was placed on agency theory, primarily based on the work of P. Bourdieu and his understanding of the "habitus."[57] This *habitus*—the sum total of the predispositions that can be said to rule out actions that are considered unthinkable by the individual within the norms of a society—regulates actions through the built-up, subconscious inculcation of habits and thought processes, including the significant role played by daily meals. As Bourdieu notes, "The habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history."[58] Although the

ing," 63). The concept of markedness ultimately derives from the Prague School of linguistics and the work of Roman Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy. See, e.g., Steven C. Caton, "Contributions of Roman Jakobson," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1987) 223–60 (here, pp. 231–32).

57. Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast," 70, 76. Bourdieu appropriated the term used by Aristotle but more recently by Marcel Mauss in translating Aristotle's *hexis* into French: "Ces 'habitudes' varient non pas simplement avec les individus et leurs imitations, elles varient surtout avec les sociétés, les éducations, les convenances et les modes, les prestiges" (Marcel Mauss, "Les Techniques du Corps," *Journal de Psychologie* 32 [1936] 5–23 [here, p. 7]).

58. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 82. A more cumbersome and technical definition of *habitus* is:

> The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the irregularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, which adjusting to the demands inscribe as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus. (ibid., 78)

In other words, structure reproduces structure as it helps to condition and define the grounds upon which it, itself, is made. Bourdieu's clearest example

level of agency allowed to the individual differs in various formulations, adopting a notion of dispositions provides a stage for the kind of strategic or tactical decisions that work to an individual's advantage in a given society.[59] This conception also allows for attention to the way that meals and feasting form individuals in a society and the way that individuals and groups can appropriate feasting to form society.

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* relates to our understanding of the practice of feasting in several important ways. First, feasts are social events that tend to replicate and reinforce existing structures. For instance, in *rites de passage* feasts the roles of men and women, of hierarchy, and of age are regulated in a manner that carries significant consistency through multiple generations.[60] But further, events such as feasting and ceremonies of all kinds set the ground for further confirmation of "dispositions" acquired primarily in quotidian life through the maintenance of roles in a public forum, thereby reinforcing the adoption of such roles by individuals.[61] Thus, feasts often serve as a mechanism of social hierarchy and legitimation.

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of habitus, preceding his actual definition, is to be seen in his ethnographic description and analysis of the Berber house, whereby he points out structural divides in a series of overlapping homologies, along the lines of male and female, light and dark, etc. ("The Berber House or the World Reversed," *Social Science Information* 9 [1970] 151–70).

59. For a similar idea, see the work of Anthony Giddens, who uses the idea of cultural-societal rules: *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); idem, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). See also William H. Sewell ("A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation," *American Journal of Sociology* 98 [1992] 1–29), who outlines distinctions in agency or practice theory between the two, although he argues for a much more flexible idea of structure, or rather, a "multiplicity" of structures (ibid., 17), along with, for instance, a range of resources.

60. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 165:

> [T]he social structuring of temporality, which organizes representations and practices, most solemnly reaffirmed in the rites of passage, fulfills a political function by symbolically manipulating *age limits*, i.e., the boundaries which define age-groups, but also the limitations imposed at different ages. The mythico-ritual categories cut up the age continuum into discontinuous segments, constituted not biologically . . . but socially, and marked by the symbolism of cosmetics and clothing, decorations, ornaments, and emblems, the tokens which express and underline the representations of the uses of the body that are legitimately associated with each socially defined age.

61. For instance, Bourdieu (ibid., 167) notes a recurrence in feedback within a system as individuals act within constraints stemming from their past experience or upbringing:

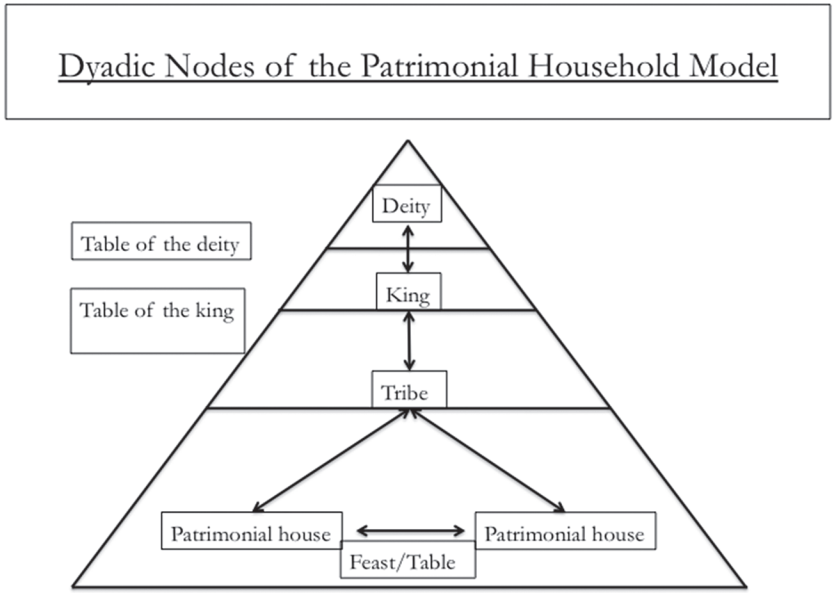
The notion of *habitus* helps to explain the interplay of marked feasting with differently marked quotidian meals. These more frequent occasions serve to raise successive generations and new initiates with the mostly unspoken rules of commensality, and in this book, within the given cultures of the Levant and ancient Near East. Habitus formed in these settings provides the backdrop against which the events and rules of feasts take shape, construct their meaning, and develop political dynamics.

Bourdieu's heavy focus on the development of habitus through early experience and due to the centrality of the home, borne of his ethnographic encounters in Algeria and France, has considerable resonance with the model of the patrimonial household normally associated with Max Weber[62] and more recently argued for by L. Stager and J. D. Schloen in relation to ancient Israel and the Levant.[63] This widely accepted conception of the nested household structure of ancient Israel (and of at least some of the broader

> Moreover, when the conditions of existence of which the members of a group are the product are very little differentiated, the dispositions which each of them exercises in his practice are confirmed and hence reinforced both by the practice of the other members of the group (one function of symbolic exchanges such as feasts and ceremonies being to favour the circular reinforcement which is the foundation of *collective belief*). . . . The self-evidence of the world is reduplicated by the instituted discourses about the world in which the whole group's adherence to that self-evidence is affirmed.

62. The history of the idea extends further back to at least the work of Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study of the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (trans. W. Small; Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1901). Originally *La Cité antique* (1864). See Arnaldo Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012) 355. Our thanks to Duncan MacRae for this reference.

63. Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985) 1–35; "The Patrimonial Kingdom of Solomon," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestina: Proceedings of the Centennial Symposium, W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and American Schools of Oriental Research, Jerusalem, May 29–31, 2000* (ed. W. G. Dever and S. Gitin; Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns, 2003) 63–74; Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001); J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001). See also Daniel Master, "State Formation Theory and the Kingdom of Ancient Israel," *JNES* 60 (2001) 117–31. We should note that this idea of "nested" or patrimonial households, especially as applied by Schloen, has been critiqued by some as monolithic and not accounting for particular cases. See, e.g., the review by Daniel E. Fleming, "Schloen's Patrimonial Pyramid: Explaining Bronze Age Society," *BASOR* 328 (2002) 73–80.



cultures as well) exhibits one powerful formulation of the interplay between levels of ancient society that finds expression in material culture, iconography, and texts. The "house of the father" (Heb. *bêt-ʾāb*), or the Patrimonial Household Model (PHM), as Schloen argues, functions in the dynamic between fact and symbol, as each recursively influences the other; this is the space in which Bourdieu locates the habitus. We argue, similarly, for a concept of feasting that is related to the performance and negotiation of these sorts of social networks, which take place at various and interpenetrating levels of society.[64] In quotidian meals, the household ingests a certain ordering of the social world; this highlights the importance of everyday meals. This same ordering is expanded during festive eating to larger polities.

As might be apparent by this point, we propose that the feast operates in such a way that it often serves to conjoin nodal points between households and structures within the lineage. As feasting

64. An approach to the feast through the lens of social network analysis has been advocated, for instance, in Barbara J. Mills et al., "The Dynamics of Social Networks in the Late Prehispanic U.S. Southwest," in *Network Analysis in Archaeology: New Approaches to Regional Interaction* (ed. C. Knappett; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 181–202.

is a significant mechanism for the creation and maintenance of kinship structures or of shared memories that operate through the patrimonial household (*bêt-ʾāb*) and lineage, larger incorporations (and smaller ones as well) that are based and built on this same model become imbricated during the establishment of more-encompassing polities. That feasting characterizes events of this sort is also illustrative of these strategies of incorporation.

We suggest that, in their commensal function, feasts operate to tie in nodes along various dimensions. Households expressed on the same horizontal dimension may be tied together, for instance, by a wedding feast (see the use of *mišteh* in Judges 14). In the vertical dimension, royal-offering feasts concretize, for instance, nodes between deity and king (as in 1 Kings 3 and 8; see below), while coronation feasts work similarly between king and household or tribe (see 1 Kings 1). We might in fact extrapolate this notion to suggest an additional temporal dimension that accounts for the way mortuary-ritual feasts display and enact connections with the ancestors.[65] This line of thinking has further resonance at the level of the monarchy. As Stager and Schloen have indicated previously, ancient Israel and Judah, among other polities in the ancient Near East, would have had a ready model for comprehending the monarchy as merely extending this chain upward one level to a king, and interactions with foreign monarchies could be understood similarly. Granted this characterization of social structure, the feast might be thought of in the terms provided by Dietler, as part of "the micropolitics of daily life."

C. Categories of Feasts

Feasts, as central social events, therefore inherently contain the possibility of being channels for maintaining and changing social hierarchy. These two perspectives come together to provide a critical element in Dietler's three basic categories of feasts—empowering, patron-role, and diacritical. This categorization of feasts primarily embraces the perspective of "what feasts do," especially with regard

65. King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 9. That household and patrimony extend beyond the grave has long been noted; see, e.g., H. C. Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife: A Biblical Complex," *HUCA* 44 (1973) 1–54, James F. Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb: Structure and Practice in Iron Age Judah," *JNES* 70 (2011) 35–53; and recently, for Israel's kings, Matthew Suriano, *The Politics of Dead Kings: Dynastic Ancestors in the Book of Kings and Ancient Israel* (FAT 2/48; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); on the same phenomenon in Qatna related to feasting, see Lange, in this volume.

to the politico-symbolic dimension.[66] In other words, these categories explore the political-power negotiations at work in feasts, particularly in relation to the designation of feasts as ritual events.[67] Thus, this analysis cuts across categorizations in terms of regularity (seasonal feasts), life cycle (birth, weaning, marriage, or funerary), and events such as military victory feasts. By doing so, it highlights various possibilities regarding the affirming or challenging of given social structures.

A brief overview of Dietler's categories will provide the basis for the fecundity of this approach to understanding feasts in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East. These feasting categories can be understood with regard to two different axes: (1) the acquisition versus the maintenance of social power, and (2) an emphasis on quantity (of guests and provisions) versus quality (of guests and provisions).[68]

The first category of Dietler's feasts, the "empowering feast" describes feasts that intend to acquire especially symbolic capital—not necessarily through an overtly aggressive style but, more basically, through achieving status in the eyes of its audience (human and divine). It is important to note that this category can also include reciprocal-type feasting, in which hosts intend to maintain their standing in a group by reciprocating an invitation to a feast.

The second category, the "patron-role feast," intends to maintain a given differential in standing by giving a feast for those who depend on the hostess's (the patroness's) benefaction. In this situation, the guests cannot reciprocate by hosting a feast of their own to repay the debt to the hostess. They must therefore attempt to pay off their debt by allegiance to the hostess and by other actions that never quite attain the symbolic value of the festive invitation.

Finally, the diacritical ("separative") feast takes place as a feast among elite peers. This kind of feast aims to retain in-group power over the (thereby) liminal outsiders and underlings, who fail to receive an invitation. Here, reciprocity between initiates supports their

66. Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast," 75.

67. Ibid., 69. We are not arguing that feasting can be reduced to politics. Biological, economic, religious, and other concerns are certainly also at play. A congenial and not simply Marxist view of politics can, in our view, be seen to include a broad swath of motivations and factors that cannot be reduced to, for example, a Nietzschean will-to-power; see ibid., 78.

68. Ibid., 75–76.

special connections to one another, fostering one kind of shared identity. Typical markers of this type of feast are any number of distinguishing elements—especially rare or luxurious foods, utensils, guests, and other paraphernalia involved.

This set of designations forms one specific way of categorizing feasts. It need not exclude other perspectives; its purpose is to uncover sociopolitical outcomes of various sorts of feasts. Furthermore, we should note that the categories can be placed on a continuum. For example, a reciprocal feast among elite peers separates this group from uninvited subelites (diacritical) and seeks to increase a hostess's status within this peer group (empowering).

D. A Short Case Study: Solomon's Feasts in 1 Kings 3 and 8

The display of these festive "micropolitics" in the texts, iconography, and archaeology of ancient Israel and the ancient Near East arguably occurs quite often in royal and temple contexts. This frequency and the comparative lavishness of the menus[69] suggest that the meals in royal, priestly, and divine households should be noted with special interest as the pinnacle of feasting. While not constitutive of all feasting,[70] significant tensions and shifting strategies parlayed through consumptive events are revealed if we carefully observe this level of society in the sources. And we suspect that these tensions and strategies were mirrored across the many formulations of households at their various levels.

In order to show some of these dynamics, this foray into the implications of Solomon's feasting will build on our reflections on the place of feasts in the nested political negotiations of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Levant.

To begin with, it is helpful to call to mind the typical mental template of a feast on display in Solomon's feast in 1 Kgs 3:15:

> Then Solomon awoke; it had been a dream. He came to Jerusalem where he stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord.[71] He offered up

69. See the contribution by C. Meyers in this volume for a detailed discussion of royal menus.

70. Or perhaps even the majority; see Shafer-Elliott in this volume. Nonetheless, elite feasting remains the most conspicuous in the archaeological, iconographic, and textual records.

71. This clause is often seen as a later Dtr addition in that it seeks to make Solomon more orthodox by having him offer sacrifices in Jerusalem. A synchronic reading (with 3:4) would have Solomon offering a massive number of animal offerings in both Gibeon and Jerusalem. See Pekka Särkiö, *Die Weisheit*

> burnt offerings and provided offerings of well-being, and provided a feast [*mišteh*; LXX: *poton megan*, "a great drinking feast"] for all his servants.

Key elements in this short description in relation to our understanding of the feast are the various interrelated levels of society involved: the deity, the king, and the king's retainers. Furthermore, there is a ritual display coupled with the menu of meat, a sign of luxury for Israel. The use here of *mišteh* ("feast") in "he made a feast for all his servants" appears as the flip side of the description of Nabal in 1 Sam 25:36 ("he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king [*wĕhinnê-lô mišteh bĕbêtô kĕmištê hammelek*]"),[72] representing one normal, expected picture of royal banqueting—perhaps in line with Dietler's understanding of a diacritical feast, one that clearly separates Nabal from David (cf. v. 11). This highlights, for instance, the normative, private nature of the word *mišteh* with its characteristic host.[73] It augments the description in 1 Kgs 3:15 by indicating the absence of a wider swath of society. This omission helps to identify some of the dynamics at work in a diacritical feast.

This feast sets itself off from quotidian meals in a number of ways: its location (whether Gibeon or Jerusalem), its connection with ritual in the incubation, and its place at a key point in Solomon's rise to power.

Although the term *mišteh* does not reappear in the remainder of Kings, the clustering of related terms with the reign of Solomon appears to be significant. For instance, Solomon's dedication of the temple in 1 Kgs 8:2–5, 62–66 (using the word *ḥag*) evokes a different set of ancient Near Eastern parallels of royal feasting, more like Dietler's patron-role feast, especially comparable to Ashurnasirpal II's feast for 70,000 at the dedication of his palace at Kalḫu around 879 B.C.E.[74]

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und Macht Salomos in der israelitischen Historiographie: Eine traditions- und redaktionskritische Untersuchung über 1 Kön 3–5 und 9–11 (Suomen Exegeettisen Seuran julkaisuja 60; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994) 22–23.

72. Also 2 Sam 13:27 in the LXX: "And Absalom made a feast like the feast of the king" (*kata ton poton tou basileōs*).

73. See Paul Kang-Kul Cho and Janling Fu, "Death and Feasting in the Isaiah Apocalypse (Isaiah 25:6–8)," in *Formation and Intertextuality in Isaiah 24–27* (Ancient Israel and Its Literature 17; ed. J. T. Hibbard and H. C. P. Kim; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2013) 117–42 (here, pp. 136–37).

74. See Donald J. Wiseman, "A New Stele of Assur-nasir-pal," *Iraq* 14 (1952) 24–44; André Finet, "Le banquet de Kalaḫ offert par le roi d'Assyrie Ašurnasirpal II (883–859)," in *Banquets d'Orient* (ed. R. Gyselen; Leuven: Bures-sur-Yvette, 1992) 31–43; Alan Millard, "King Solomon in His Ancient Context,"

The significance of the Ashurnasirpal parallel lies in its highlighting of what may be a depiction of Solomon as participating in a wider conception of Near Eastern kingship. Arguably, then, Solomon's celebration of the temple's construction as a "house" (*bayit*) makes the participants in the celebration the "house's" inhabitants, its family, and the king as the convener of the feast, its patrimonial head.[75] The Solomon and Ashurnasirpal examples are parallel in the massive quantities of food consumed, the occasion of a major building (of a temple for Solomon and a palace for Ashurnasirpal II), the extended period of time in celebration (two weeks in 1 Kings, 10 days in Kalḫu), and the motif of the entire land or country (*kol yiśrāʾēl*, "all Israel" and "the happy peoples of all the lands together with the people of Kalḫu").

These parallels are evocative in that they show the full exposition of the household model during foundational events. But the king's position is not value-neutral; rather, his celebration of the feast subtly makes him its author, the giver of the gift, and thereby places others in his debt through their ingestion of his feast. Their bond to the king is *in* their bodies, in keeping with the perspective presented above, in reliance on Dietler and Mauss.

Because of the powerful associations between feasting and the monarchy in terms of ritual, claims to succession and legitimacy were grounded in the successful and ritual performance of the feast in line with societal expectations. In this view, feasting is not so much a cause as a manifestation of a claim to legitimacy (cf. 1 Kings 1).

Within the fact-and-symbol dialectic constructed on the framework of the household, feasting interacted with the regular practice of domestic meals to set in place the mechanisms for further transformations—in this case, for Israelite society. The table of the king,

in *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium* (ed. L. K. Handy; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 30–53 (here, p. 43). Wiseman points to a similar dedicatory act of Sennacherib for his palace at Nineveh ("A New Stele," 29, citing D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* [OIP 2; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924] 116, II 65–76). While we do not wish to suggest a reduction of the Hebrew terminology of *ḥag* and *mišteh* to patron-role and diacritical types of feasting, respectively, it is striking how these texts employ feasting for different purposes and use different terminology. For more on this terminology, see Janling Fu, *Feasting, Ritual and Royal Legitimation in Ancient Israel*, forthcoming.

75. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel"; Schloen, *The House of the Father*. This point will be further argued by Janling Fu, "Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Religion: Feasting as a Politics of Legitimation in Iron Age Israel," forthcoming.

particularly at key moments, functioned to embody the rules and judgments of the *pater familias* by way of ingestion.[76]

E. "Archaeological Signature"

Turning finally to a more methodological concern, as mentioned above, this volume as a whole proposes to follow what might be termed an "archaeological signature" in the study of meals. This undertaking looks to the work of B. Hayden, who offers a useful summary of archaeological indicators for feasting that are used in the collation of evidence. These may be summarized in six areas (because some redundancies in his list exist):[77] (1) contemporary written records such as administrative records of provisions collected or portions given (as opposed to noncontemporary records such as the Hebrew Bible); (2) pictorial representations, whether in monumental form, depicted on vessels, or represented in miniature; (3) remains of food and drink, whether seen in the faunal remains of bone fragments or tested through chemical residue analysis of alcohol or lipids (fats); (4) ceramic assemblages, the repertoire of pottery, particularly if there are disproportionate quantities of open vessels, serving bowls, or inordinately large vessels that would likely indicate larger gatherings focused on consumption, especially greater diversity or unusual luxury of items consumed; (5) facilities where the feast would be prepared and take place; and (6) prestige and ritual items that might raise the register beyond that of a normal meal. All of these sorts of evidence are on display in the contributions in this volume. These bodies of evidence form a complex basis for evaluating both the nature of "actual feasting" in antiquity and the individual literary and iconographic portrayals of feasting in contemporary and later texts.

This volume seeks to expand the individual categories of analysis, thereby bringing together a significant number of these six areas in

76. See above, §2.B.

77. Hayden, "Fabulous Feasts," 40–41. The full list is as follows: food, preparation vessels, serving vessels, food-preparation facilities, special food-disposal features, feasting facilities, special locations, associated prestige items, ritualized items of etiquette, paraphernalia for public rituals, existence of aggrandizers, record-keeping devices, pictorial and written records of feasts, food-storage facilities, and resource characteristics. These six categories we adapt from Zuckerman, "Slaying Oxen and Killing Sheep," 187–88. See also MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone*, 151; Twiss, "Transformations in an Early Agricultural Society," 420–22.

each essay and in the volume as a whole. Attention to the ceramic assemblages for consumption, preparation, and faunal analyses provides many of the data for analysis in the contributions of J. Magness, S. Lange, and J. Greer. Iconography is combined with administrative records (S. Renette) or redaction-critical textual study (K.-P. Adam). C. Shafer-Elliott focuses on the prestige and ritual items connected with household feasting. Contemporary administrative texts such as ration lists form the comparative basis for L. Pace's theoretical reflections. A general thread running through the contributions in this volume is reflection on literary texts or iconographic representations that are one step removed from "actual feasting." The discussions continually build on comparative interactions with feasting as it would have occurred in both Israel and the broader Near East (C. Meyers, P. Altmann). As a result, the symbolic implications of the portrayals of feasting events that arise from cultural anthropological categories feature prominently; however, they retain close interaction with the archaeological details of feasting. Thus theoretical reflection, literary and iconographic display, and analysis of material culture stand side by side.

3. The Entrée

The contributions to this volume lay out a considerable breadth of approach that brings together evidence, methodologies, and meanings from the ancient Near Eastern and Hebrew Biblical worlds and beyond. They are meant to work across the "text-artifact" gulf toward a wholistic array of concerns. The discerning reader may notice some significant gaps—for instance, the contributing essays do not address Egypt, Mycenae, or Classical Greece; issues of the symposion and Hellenistic overlap; Hittite Anatolia or Persia. Neither do they deal substantively with Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian traditions. Thus, the volume does not and was not intended to stand on its own as a comprehensive handbook for understanding feasting in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East. Its purpose, rather, is to serve as a point of entry to the study of this material. In this regard, its diversity and reach should be significant and enriching for the acquisition of an interdisciplinary overview of the sorts of issues involved in studying the *topos* of the feast and foodways.

Jodi Magness takes a broad historical view and seeks to employ the correlation between changes in ceramics and changes in cuisine in early Islamic, Old Babylonian, and Classical Greek contexts

to argue that the same changes can be correlated in the Late Iron Age Israelite-Judahite context. By juxtaposing styles of preparation and serving vessels for display-dining with recipe texts (and other data) from the compared cultures, she makes a strong case that the changes in Late Iron Age cooking pottery reflect a decline in meat consumption. She concludes by showing how this change in ceramics agrees with the elimination of meat consumption (from sacrificial animals) outside the sanctuary in Leviticus 17.

Steve Renette's "Feasts on Many Occasions: Diversity in Mesopotamian Banquet Scenes during the Early Dynastic Period" provides a substantial engagement with the oldest corpus of feasting iconography from the ancient Near East, arising from Early Dynastic southern Mesopotamia. This discussion offers the diachronic starting point for later continuations of the theme of feasting throughout the region. Renette argues against a long-standing tradition that the iconography depicts a stable *topos* and scene, contending instead that the depictions are largely connected with specific situations and particular political dynamics at a time and place where the configuration of authority in ancient Mesopotamia was unsettled. The disappearance of these scenes in the subsequent period—by which time a clearer political hierarchy had emerged—points toward the importance of feasting iconography for the negotiation of political power at the table between relative equals.

Turning to the Levant, Sarah Lange brings together a careful investigation of the recently excavated second-millennium B.C.E. archaeological remains in the royal tombs of the Syrian city of Qaṭna with contemporary texts about the netherworld from Mari and Ugarit in "The Next Level and the Final Stage: Consistency and Change in the Provision of Meals for the Dead in Their Different Stages of Existence and the Accompanying Feasting Acts of the Living, as Evidenced at Mari, Qaṭna, and Ugarit." Through this juxtaposition of sources, Lange argues that royal figures progressed through three stages of existence in the netherworld, and each change correlated with specific feasting rituals in the royal tombs. Her discussion thus focuses on the place of the feast in maintaining temporal connections with past generations.

Jonathan Greer's "Power to Unite and Power to Divide: Sacred Feasting and Social Change at Iron II Tel Dan" takes the results of architectural, zooarchaeological, and ceramic changes at Tel Dan related to feasting between the tenth–ninth century's B.C.E. remains and the ninth–eighth century's B.C.E. remains as its starting point.

Greer then compares this archaeological evidence with anthropological models to identify the probable political use of the two different sorts of feasting. A final step shows how the combined material culture and anthropological model might relate to the political developments of the Northern Kingdom of Israel at these points in history.

The essay "Menu: Royal Repasts and Social Class in Biblical Israel" by Carol Meyers provides a cross section of the royal meals, especially during the United Monarchy. She contrasts the depictions of their daily fare with their special feasts before moving into comparisons with rulers throughout ancient Mesopotamia, the Levant (Emar), and Egypt. She brings these discussions together in arguing that the lack of a differentiated cuisine for biblical Israel's kings and the inclusion of women (even palace women) in the preparation of royal meals point to its relatively flat hierarchy, though this does not diminish the commensal politics that took place through these feasts.

Famine, the feared opposite of the feast, takes center stage in Peter Altmann's contribution, "Feast and Famine: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives on Lack as a Backdrop for Plenty in the Hebrew Bible." Altmann outlines current sociological and anthropological reflections on the implications of hunger and famine, tracing the ways that they appear in the ancient world. He argues that ancient conceptions of famine are often intricately related to war and to the success or failure of royal provision. In military terms and in terms of agricultural fertility, the ruler was generally understood to operate as the nexus between the divine world and abundance—a motif that features in the biblical narratives of 2 Kings 6–7.

Leann Pace is primarily concerned with the discourse and scholarly object of "feasting" in the studies of the ancient Levant and the Bible that go too far in sundering feasting from the broader context of meals—especially everyday meals. "Feasting and Everyday Meals in the World of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship Reexamined through Material Culture and Texts" emphasizes the importance of keeping both in view and investigating each with a view toward the other. Pace investigates the impulse given to the notion of feasting as a "variation on [the] theme" of meals provided by M. Douglas some 50 years ago, showing how recent archaeologists and anthropologists have refined this notion. Her final section demonstrates that this sort of overlap proves productive for interpreting various biblical texts.

Cynthia Shafer-Elliott also addresses the interplay between the diffuse households and more-singular, special feasting in Israel–Palestine

and the Hebrew Bible in "The Role of the Household in the Religious Feasting of Ancient Israel and Judah." She juxtaposes the detailed spatial analysis of one room containing cultic and feasting remains in a "four-roomed house" from Tell Halif with indications of household feasting in the Hebrew Bible. On the basis of these two data sets, she argues that there was a much deeper interaction between household religious feasting and the centralized sanctuary feasts prescribed by the pentateuchal texts than is generally assumed. Despite the biblical focus on sanctuary feasting, she posits that most feasting, including cultic feasting, in ancient Israel–Judah took place in household settings. Her essay also provides theoretical insight into the overlap between quotidian meals and feasting, on the one hand, and the interlacing of households and larger polities, on the other.

Klaus-Peter Adam's "Feasting and Foodways in Psalm 23 and the Contribution of Redaction Criticism to the Interpretation of Meals" presents the most in-depth textual study in the collection. This essay shows that the terminology used in this most well-known of psalms arises in large part from texts that deal with the depiction of Israel's collective history in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, read in light of inner-biblical interpretation, Psalm 23 applies Yahweh's protective posture as shepherd, ruler, and judge to the psalmist's individual situation so that the psalmist no longer takes up defensive action. He instead trusts completely in Yahweh's activity to provide a victory feast that perhaps continues even into a cultic funerary setting. Adam then takes another step, drawing on recent methodological developments in Psalms scholarship, showing how the redaction-critical location of Psalm 23 in its developing contexts (Psalms 15–24, then later Psalms 3–41) allow the feast in Ps 23:5 to take on additional implications as a "victory feast for the poor."

4. Conclusion

In the preceding sections, we have sought to illustrate the tenuous ambiguities and fascinating complexities inherent within and, indeed, engendered by the study of foodways and feasting. The multiple variables available for interpretation offer formidable hurdles to the generalist and specialist alike because issues of theory and scale complicate the discussion. In order to meet these challenges, we have drawn on Bourdieu's notion of the habitus, Dietler's ritual emphasis and his threefold categorization of feasting, Schloen's

Patrimonial Household Model, and Hayden's "archaeological signature" in order to formulate a robust conception of feasting.

The need to balance scholarly etic perspectives with clearer emic understandings of feasting, grounded within time and space—that is, situated regionally—becomes apparent when we construct a comparative database as well. It is our contention that this study and the succeeding contributions in the volume will offer new and helpful avenues through which to explore the important dynamics of food and drink as tied to structures of politics and society. In so doing, by invoking a broader-based regional and diachronic perspective, we hope to lay groundwork for a fuller understanding of feasting and foodways with regard to the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East.

Conspicuous Consumption: Dining on Meat in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Near East

Jodi Magness

1. Introduction

A well-known adage says that we are what we eat. As anthropologists have argued, differentiated cuisines and conspicuous consumption are an expression of social hierarchies and often reinforce class distinctions. For example, "A salient feature of the culinary cultures of the major societies of Europe and Asia is their association with hierarchical man."[1] Yet this also holds true for rulers and local elites in ancient societies, who typically indulged in a wide variety of luxury cuisines, showcasing their consumption through display dining.[2] Evidence of this phenomenon is found in meat consumption in

Author's note: I am grateful to Peter Altmann, Jonathan Greer, and Susan Weingarten for their comments on drafts of this paper, although I alone am responsible for its contents.

1. Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 99. Also see Michael Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast: Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics, and Power in African Contexts," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 65–114 (especially p. 74); Tamara L. Bray, "The Commensal Politics of Early States and Empires," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 1–13 (here, p. 1). However, Massimo Montanari (*Food Is Culture* [trans. A. Sonnenfeld; New York: Columbia University Press, 2006] 35–37) cautions that many of the foods and food ideologies of medieval and Renaissance European elites were peasant in origin: "The gap between discourse and practice, between word and action, between mental codes and real customs, is obvious" (ibid., 37). In other words, elites sometimes adopt foods characteristic of the lower classes as a status symbol.

2. Dietler ("Theorizing the Feast," 85–86) describes this type of elite display dining as "diacritical feasts," which are characterized by "style and taste" in food content/ingredients, preparation, and presentation.

several parts of the ancient Mediterranean world and Near East, where the wealthier classes enjoyed a diversified diet that included a broad spectrum of food ingredients prepared in different ways and incorporated imported spices, most of which were out of the reach of the poor.[3] Cookbooks containing elaborate recipes with meat or fowl served the needs of literate elites and reflected the centrality of meat consumption to display dining.[4] An expensive commodity, meat was not part of the normal everyday diet because, without refrigeration, once an animal was slaughtered in the warm Mediterranean and Near Eastern climates, it had to be cooked and eaten immediately or preserved by salting or smoking.[5] Non-elites could

3. See, inter alia, Eliyahu Ashtor, "The Diet of the Salaried Classes in the Medieval Near East," *Journal of Asian History* 4 (1970) 1–24 (here, pp. 7, 12–13); Maxime Rodinson, "Studies in Arabic Manuscripts Relating to Cookery," in *Medieval Arab Cookery: Essays and Translations* (ed. M. Rodinson, A. J. Arberry, and C. Perry; Devon: Prospect, 2001), 91–164 (here, p. 155); David Waines, " 'Luxury Foods' in Medieval Islamic Societies," *World Archaeology* 34 (2003) 571–80 (here, p. 575); Muhammad Manazir Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids, 170–289 AH, 786–902 AD* (New York: Longman, 1979) 103; Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class*, 105; Nawal Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens: Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq's Tenth-Century Baghdadi Cookbook* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 34–35; Lisa Yehuda, "Cooking and Food in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *The Last Supper at Apollonia: The Final Days of the Crusader Castle in Herzliya* (ed. O. Tal; Tel Aviv: Israel Museum, 2011) [52–61] (here, p. [57]); Irit Ziffer, "Setting Tables in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," in ibid., [69–86] (here, p. [75]).

4. Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class*, 98–99, 129; Emma Blake, "The Material Expression of Cult, Ritual, and Feasting," in *The Archaeology of Mediterranean Prehistory* (ed. E. Blake and A. B. Knapp; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005) 102–29 (here, p. 106). For ancient recipes and bibliography, see Jean Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World: Cooking in Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Jodi Magness, "Early Islamic Pottery: Evidence of a Revolution in Diet and Dining Habits?" in *Agency and Identity in the Ancient Near East: New Paths Forward* (ed. S. R. Steadman and J. C. Ross; London: Equinox, 2010) 117–26 (here, pp. 120–21); Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*.

5. Melinda A. Zeder (*Feeding Cities: Specialized Animal Economy in the Ancient Near East* [Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 1991] 34) notes that the "use of the living animal as a mobile meat locker solves the storage problem for this otherwise highly perishable animal product." I thank Norman Yoffee for bringing to my attention Zeder's work. The documents from the Cairo Geniza indicate that in medieval Egypt many people consumed meat only on weekends and holidays, and usually this was limited to chicken and/or fish (at least among the Jewish residents); see Shlomo D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, vol. 4: *Daily Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 233–34, 249–50; for a contrast between the diet of the wealthy and the poor, see pp. 244–45. Also see

not afford to cull animals from their herds—which provided valuable by-products such as milk, wool, and dung or were raised for their labor potential—on a daily or even weekly basis.[6] Meat was so precious that much of its consumption was strictly regulated, often with the controlled context of ritual sacrifices.[7]

In this essay, I focus particularly on evidence of meat consumption in Iron Age Palestine, the preclassical Aegean, and the early Islamic East, drawing on a combination of literary sources and archaeological and zoological data. The broad temporal and geographical scope of this study has provided a rich base of comparative evidence. I am especially interested in exploring it to determine how pottery types provide evidence of changes in culinary habits—that is, which foods were consumed, and how they were prepared and served. The last part of the essay, building on the comparative evidence, argues that cooking pot types indicate a shortage of meat in late Iron Age Judah, perhaps due to the export of prime-age animals to Assyria, and this shortage may also be reflected in the biblical legislation.

Mark Cohen, "Feeding the Poor and Clothing the Naked: The Cairo Geniza," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (2005) 407–21. Discussing Europe in the sixth–tenth centuries, Massimo Montanari (*The Culture of Food* [trans. C. Ipsen; Oxford: Blackwell, 1994] 32) observes that "[m]eat consumption was socially differentiated as well and few were able to eat fresh meat."

6. Paula Wapnish ("Is *ṣēnī ana lā māni* an Accurate Description or a Royal Boast?" in *Retrieving the Past: Essays on Archaeological Research and Methodology in Honor of Gus W. Van Beek* [ed. J. D. Seger; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996] 285–96) notes that "mortality represents decisions about herd management and evidence of the importance given to the various goals of stock rearing, i.e., meat, milk, fiber, and dung production, and provision of useful labor" (ibid., 289). Also see Zeder, *Feeding Cities*, 25–36; Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013) 181.

7. See Edwin Firmage, "Zoology," *ABD* 6:1109–67: "Indeed, it was not uncommon [in antiquity] for a single animal to provide both the sacrifice and the meal. Every use of meat thus became a sacral meal, and every act of animal slaughter a sacrifice. The [Hebrew] Bible makes this connection explicit. In Israelite priestly literature, sacrifice and slaughter were nearly synonymous" (ibid., 1120). Also see Jonathan S. Greer, *Dinner at Dan: A Biblical and Archaeological Exploration of Sacred Feasting at Iron Age II Tel Dan* (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2011) 4 (whom I thank for sending me a copy of his dissertation). Gunnel Ekroth, "Meat in Ancient Greece: Sacrificial, Sacred, or Secular?" *Food and History* 5 (2007) 249–72 (here, p. 269), distinguishes between sacrificial and sacred meat—that is, meat from animals offered for sacrifice (all or part of which may have been burned on an altar), and meat from animals that were slaughtered and eaten at a sanctuary without having parts burned on an altar.

2. Dining on Meat in the Early Islamic East

I begin with the early Islamic East (seventh–eleventh centuries C.E.), when elite display dining centered on the consumption of meat.[8] In the centuries following the Muslim conquests, an agricultural revolution introduced a broad spectrum of exotic new crops that affected almost every aspect of everyday life.[9] The cultivation of these crops was made possible by using new irrigation technologies such as *qanat*s (a type of underground irrigation canal) and water wheels.[10] Not only were these technologies and many of the crops of Persian or Indian origin, but so were the recipes and dishes in which they were used and the types of vessels in which the dishes were prepared and served. Gourmet display dining, which also had its roots in ancient Persia, was one feature of the highly sophisticated urban cultural tradition of the Muslims.[11]

During the Abbasid period (beginning in 750 C.E.), the Baghdad elite developed an appreciation of gourmet cuisine, giving rise to the composition of cooking books and manuals.[12] The earliest sur-

8. See Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 30, 34, 38, 42.

9. See Andrew M. Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World: The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques—700–1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); idem, "The Arab Agricultural Revolution and Its Diffusion, 700–1100," in *Patterns of Everyday Life* (ed. D. Waines; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2002) 247–88; idem, "A Medieval Green Revolution: New Crops and Farming Techniques in the Early Islamic World," in *Production and the Exploitation of Resources* (ed. M. G. Morony; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2002) 219–48; Alan Walmsley, "Production, Exchange and Regional Trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean: Old Structures, New Systems?" in *The Long Eighth Century* (ed. I. Lyse Hansen and C. Wickham; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 265–343 (here, pp. 310–17). I do not share the reservations expressed by some scholars about describing the transformation in irrigation and farming practices and crops and diet in the centuries following the early Islamic conquests as a revolution. For example, Michael Decker ("Settlement and Agriculture in the Levant: 6th–8th Centuries," in *Le Proche-Orient de Justinien aux Abbassides: Peuplement et dynamiques spatiales* [ed. A. Borrut et al.; Bibliothèque de Antiquité Tardive 19; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011] 1–6) expresses skepticism due to the relatively late spread of the cultivation of rice and cotton, although neither is central to Andrew Watson's claim of an agricultural revolution.

10. A. M. Watson, "The Arab Agricultural Revolution," 247; idem, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World*, 106–10; Paul Ward English, "The Origin and Spread of Qanats in the Old World," in *Production and the Exploitation of Resources* (ed. M. G. Morony; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2002) 273–84.

11. A. M. Watson, "The Arab Agricultural Revolution," 261; Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 30–33.

12. Ibid.

viving cookbook was compiled in the tenth century by Ibn Sayyar al-Warraq. It contains 615 recipes, many of which are for meat and chicken, as well as advice on kitchen utensils, dietary health, and proper table etiquette.[13] Although early Islamic recipes call for some meat to be grilled, stews were especially popular. Chunks of meat or meat kabobs, sometimes braised or fried first, were boiled in water over a slow fire for at least an hour.[14] Various ingredients were added to the water, including herbs and spices (sometimes ginger or saffron), vinegar, date, lemon, or pomegranate juice, vegetables (often onions and leeks), and dried fruits and nuts.[15] Sometimes rice or wheat was cooked in the broth with the other ingredients.

The complexity typical of early Islamic cooking is illustrated by a recipe provided by al-Murraq for a popular dish of Persian origin called *sikbaj*:[16]

> Take choice cuts of beef such as the innards, top back, lower neck, or the inner thighs, and shoulders. Take all of the innards such as the

13. See Nasrallah (ibid., 25–27), who notes that culinary practices and techniques are largely the same in later Islamic cookbooks (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries), albeit with regional variations. Gourmet display dining and cookbooks with complex recipes also became popular among European elites in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; see Montanari, *The Culture of Food*, 60–65.

14. I include in the term *early Islamic* recipes that may have originated among non-Muslim populations under Muslim rule. Goitein (*A Mediterranean Society*, 227) did not find a single description of a specifically Jewish dish or meal in the Cairo Geniza. For the popularity of meat stews in early Islamic cuisine, see Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 38; for grilled meat, see p. 41. Also see Charles Perry, "The Description of Familiar Foods (*Kitāb wasf al-atʿima al-muʿtāda*)," in *Medieval Arab Cookery: Essays and Translations* (M. Rodinson, A. J. Arberry, and C. Perry; Devon: Prospect Books, 2001) 273–466 (here, p. 285); Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, 79. Susan Weingarten ("Food in Roman Palestine: Ancient Sources and Modern Research," *Food and History* 5 [2007] 41–66) notes that the Babylonian Talmud suggests "a much greater availability of meat in Babylonia" than in Palestine, and points to parallels between Jewish Babylonian food of the Geonic period (ninth–tenth centuries C.E.) and descriptions in contemporary Islamic sources from Baghdad (pp. 52–53).

15. Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, 103–5.

16. Translated by Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 254, and based on the Arabic edition by Kaj Öhrnberg and Sahban Mroueh (Studia Orientalia 60. Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 1987). Also see Arthur John Arberry, "A Baghdad Cookery Book (*Kitāb al-tabīkh*)," in *Medieval Arab Cookery: Essays and Translations* (M. Rodinson, A. J. Arberry, and C. Perry; Devon: Prospect Books, 2001) 19–90 (here, p. 40); Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, 83. For soapstone vessels, see Magness, "Early Islamic Pottery," 124; Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 84–85.

> diaphragm, skirt steaks, small intestines, large intestines, omasum, and the coiled part of small intestines. Put all these meats in a soapstone pot after you wash them and cut them into equal parts [and boil them in wine vinegar and water]. When they are almost done, take them out and put them on a plate.
>
> Choose some excellent plump chickens, [clean them,] and put them in the pot with a fresh batch of wine vinegar, [return the almost-cooked meat,] and let them cook.
>
> When the chicken is done, add 5 *dirham*s coriander seeds, 1 *dirham* ginger, 3 *dirham*s saffron, and 2 *dirham*s each of black pepper, parsley, and rue.
>
> Cut bread into triangles. Ladle enough broth for the bread to sop it. Arrange the meat and chicken in an organized manner. Garnish it with slices of rolled sandwiches, thin meat patties, sausages of small intestines, very large sausages of lower intestines, and sausages of large intestines. Scatter pieces of chopped cheese all over it and serve it with mustard, God willing.

Early Islamic recipes are characterized by their richness of flavor, fat content, diversity of ingredients, and wide range of aromatic plants and spices (many of which were imported from China, India, and southern Arabia).[17] Sweet and sour or salty tastes were contrasted by using rose water and fruits and fruit juices, including pomegranates, grapes, sour oranges, and lemons.[18] The recipes are also marked by their complexity, requiring a lengthy process of preparation that involved roasting, braising or frying, boiling, preparing various components separately, and then adding one to another.[19] Islamic recipes call for chunks of meat to be boiled in water together with the other ingredients. In other words, the meat was cooked in the sauce, not separately from it.

The early Islamic East illustrates nicely the correlation between pottery types and cuisine, as a preference for meat-based cuisine is reflected by changes in Palestinian ceramic repertoires following the Muslim conquest. For example, the narrow-necked cooking pots that were native to the Palestinian tradition for centuries (see below) had disappeared by the ninth–tenth centuries C.E., replaced by wide-

17. Rodinson, "Studies in Arabic Manuscripts," 155; Manuela Marin, "Beyond Taste: the Complements of Colour and Smell in the Medieval Arab Culinary Tradition," in *Culinary Cultures of the Middle East* (ed. S. Zubaida and R. Tapper; London: Tauris, 1994) 205–14.

18. Ashtor, "The Diet of the Salaried Classes," 7; Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, 79; Montanari, *Food Is Culture*, 135.

19. Waines, "'Luxury Foods' in Medieval Islamic Societies," 575; Rodinson, "Studies in Arabic Manuscripts," 156.

mouthed globular cooking pots, deep casserole dishes, and shallow frying pans, some of them glazed. Although casseroles had long been common in Palestine, the early Islamic specimens tend to be deeper than their predecessors. Cooking pots of the ninth and tenth centuries have a globular body with no neck and a large opening that gives them a hole-mouth shape. These vessels likely reflect the Islamic preference for cooking chunks of meat, which would not fit into a narrow-necked cooking pot.[20] In premodern times, meat was cooked while still on the bone, so that nothing was lost or wasted, and even the bone marrow was prized.[21] Therefore, pots used for boiling or stewing meat needed openings large enough to accommodate bones.

Early Islamic cuisine was characterized especially by variety and encompassed the preparation of a wide range of different dishes or the same dish prepared in various ways, and the offering of a variety of dishes at a single meal.[22] Offering guests a variety of foods became a sign of luxury and hospitality, to the point that it was expected that the surface of the table would not be visible due to the number of dishes.[23] The diners sat on cushions or mats on the floor, and the food was brought out on a large tray that was placed on the floor or on a low table.[24] At the tables of the wealthiest, guests could choose from a menu, but otherwise all of the food was set out at the same time, and each diner took what he pleased.[25] The tray held common dishes from which everyone helped himself or herself, using pieces of bread to pick up morsels of food and sop up sauces.[26] Table etiquette was predicated on sharing from common dishes, so good manners dictated that one should take small pieces of food and leave the choicest bits for others.[27] The custom

20. See my "Early Islamic Pottery," 124.

21. Ziffer ("Setting Tables in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," [80]) notes that, in medieval Europe, most foods were cooked for prolonged periods—which resulted in a mash—due to the poor condition of people's teeth.

22. Waines, "'Luxury Foods' in Medieval Islamic Societies," 575–76.

23. Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, 164.

24. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 144–45; Ziffer, "Setting Tables in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," [84]. In contrast, at formal meals in the Roman world, diners reclined on couches.

25. Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, 159–60; Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class*, 130.

26. Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, 163; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 148.

27. Ahsan, *Social Life under the Abbasids*, 163; Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class*, 130–31.

of setting all of the food out at once instead of serving it in courses may be traced back to ancient Persia, as the epicure Athenaeus of Naucratis, writing ca. 200 C.E., describes in his collation of earlier sources: "[A]ll the food is placed on the table together."[28] Similarly, in ancient Greece the food was set on the table all at once instead of in courses (as among the Romans), prompting Athenaeus's remark about a passage in Homer's *Odyssey*: "The tables remained there beside them covered with food throughout the entire party, as is still the custom today among many uncivilized peoples."[29]

3. Dining on Meat in the Ancient Near East

Citing Jean Bottéro's work, David Waines has suggested that early Islamic gourmet recipes and dining

> most likely reflected a revival or continuation of what was the oldest known high culinary tradition in history. . . . Whereas in [the recipes attributed to the Roman epicure] Apicius the key feature of the culinary art was the sauce made to accompany a main ingredient such as chicken or fish, the Babylonian art for simple dishes emphasized placing the main ingredient in water to boil along with the necessary condiments.[30]

Nawal Nasrallah discusses the similarities between the ancient Mesopotamian culinary tradition and early Islamic cuisine. Like Waines, she notes that both cuisines typically combined meat and vegetables in a seasoned and enriched stew.[31] Other similarities include the use of rendered sheep's tail fat, an emphasis on removing the froth of boiling meat, a combination of different meats in the same dish, the addition of spices and herbs, a tendency to combine salty and sour tastes in the same dish, and a love of accompanying relishes. At the same time, Nasrallah observes that regional and ethnic influences affected these culinary traditions.[32] The comments by Waines and Nasrallah raise an interesting question: does early Islamic cuisine have roots in significantly older traditions in the Near East?

An examination of ancient Babylonian recipes dating to ca. 1600 B.C.E., published by Bottéro, reveals similarities with and differ-

28. From S. Douglas Olson, ed. and trans., *Athenaeus: The Learned Banqueters* (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006) 2:197 (4.145–46). For this manner of serving food, see Montanari, *Food Is Culture*, 66.

29. From Olson, *The Learned Banqueters*, 1:65 (Ath. 1.11–12).

30. Waines, "'Luxury Foods' in Medieval Islamic Societies," 574.

31. Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 45–55; see especially p. 47.

32. Ibid., 47–50.

ences from early Islamic cuisine.[33] Both culinary traditions display a preference for meat-based preparations but differ in the manner in which the dishes were served. Most of the Babylonian recipes involve the preparation of meat or fowl. Typically, they call for chunks of browned (sautéed) and rinsed meat to be cooked in a broth with fat, grain, and vegetables. Common seasonings include varieties of onions, leeks, and garlic that were mashed or chopped together, and spices such as salt, dodder, cumin, dill, and coriander.[34] Sometimes fresh blood or milk was added to the broth, bringing to mind the biblical prohibitions against the consumption of blood and the cooking of a kid in its mother's milk (Lev 17:10–14; Exod 23:19).[35]

Many of the Babylonian recipes are for different types of broths.[36] For example:

> *Salted broth*: Leg of mutton (?), but no other meat is used. Prepare water, add fat; dodder as desired, salt to taste; cypress; onion and *samidu*; cumin; coriander; leek and garlic, mashed with *kisimmu*. (Once it is cooked), it is ready to serve.[37]

> *Elamite broth*: Meat is used. Prepare water; add fat; dill, *šuhutinnû*; coriander; leek and garlic, bound (?) with blood; a corresponding amount of *kisimmu*; and more garlic. The (original) name of this dish is *zukanda*.[38]

Even more elaborate recipes, in which poultry was baked in pastry shells, began by boiling the ingredients.[39]

As a comparison of recipes indicates, in ancient Babylonia and the early Islamic world, elite display dining was based on the conspicuous consumption of meat. In these culinary traditions meat was prepared in the same manner: by boiling chunks of browned meat in a sauce or broth to which other ingredients were added. However, whereas in early Islamic recipes the meat was served and

33. Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World*; idem, *Textes culinaires Mésopotamiens, Mesopotamian Culinary Texts* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 6; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995).

34. Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World*, 66–68.

35. Ibid., 70.

36. Ibid., 26–29. See idem, *Mesopotamian Culinary Texts*, 4, 8 n. 10, noting that the Akkadian term *mû* ("water") might better be understood in these recipes as a "boiled meat dish" instead of "broth." The recipes in Bottéro, *Mesopotamian Culinary Texts*, were translated by Jack Sasson and updated by Bottéro (see 3 n. 1). The recipes in Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World*, were translated and adapted by Bottéro (see p. 5).

37. Ibid., 67.

38. Ibid., 27.

39. Ibid., 29–33.

eaten in the sauce, in Babylonia the meat sometimes was removed from the broth, which was then served separately or saved:[40] "When it is all cooked, I remove the pot from the fire, and before the broth cools, you rub the meat with garlic, add greens and vinegar. The broth may be eaten at a later time."[41] In other words, in contrast to early Islamic cuisine, in Babylonia the sauce or broth was not necessarily consumed together with the meat.

Similar to the early Islamic period, however, is the correlation between cuisine and serving vessels. A good example of this correlation between pottery types and cuisine arises from the royal cemetery at Ur, which yielded hundreds of metal, stone, and pottery vessels connected with the preparation, serving, and consumption of various foods and beverages.[42] C. Leonard Woolley noted that cooked foods had been placed in the tombs: "[W]ith the pots were scattered animal bones, and all the complete saucers contained bones which were for the most part small and broken—obviously the remains of cooked dishes."[43] The small, broken animal bones must represent the remains of chunks of meat, which—judging from the associated saucers—were served alone (or perhaps with cooked vegetables) and not in a broth; that is, similar to the preparation described in Babylonian recipes. The vessels with bones in the tombs at Ur attest the importance of meat consumption in an elite (albeit funerary) context and show how pottery types indicate the manner in which food is prepared and served. The evidence reviewed here attests the centrality of meat in elite display dining in the ancient Near East and to a long tradition of preparing the meat by cutting it into chunks and boiling it.

40. See idem, *Textes culinaires Mésopotamiens*, 20.

41. Idem, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World*, 73.

42. See C. Leonard Woolley, *Ur Excavations*, vol. 2: *The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonid Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931: Text and Plates* (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1934). Also see Susan Pollock, "Feasts, Funerals, and Fast Food in Early Mesopotamian States," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 17–38 (here, pp. 26–27); Irene Winter, "Reading Ritual in the Archaeological Record: Deposition Pattern and Function of Two Artifact Types from the Royal Cemetery of Ur," in *Fluchtpunkt Uruk: Archäologische Einheit aus methodischer Vielfalt* (ed. H. Kühne, R. Bernbeck, and K. Bartl; Rahden: Marie Leidorf, 1999) 229–56.

43. Woolley, *Ur Excavations*, 2:104.

4. Dining on Meat in the Ancient Aegean

Culinary traditions in the ancient Aegean provide an instructive comparison with the Near East. In the Late Bronze Age Aegean, meat usually was prepared by being cut into chunks and boiled. As Susan Sherratt notes, "This method of cooking is much more economical than grilling or roasting, since the meat can be cut into smaller pieces and bulked out with liquids and other ingredients, and since boiling or stewing makes even the toughest bits edible."[44] Wide-mouthed cooking pots (cauldrons) were also used in the Late Bronze Age Aegean for boiling meat. However, because the cooking was done on hearths rather than in clay ovens, Aegean cooking pots had flat bases with three high feet that could be set above or beside the fire.[45] Tripod cooking pots or cauldrons apparently originated in Early Minoan Crete and spread from there to the mainland in the Late Minoan IIA period, where the native cooking vessel was a one-handled cooking pot with button base (a precursor of the *chytra*).[46] Tripod cauldrons would have been better suited than the one-handled button base cooking pots for boiling chunks of meat in broth.

As Sherratt notes, the Homeric epics always describe meat as grilled on spits over a fire rather than boiled. Tripod cauldrons are used in heroic contexts for ceremonial hand washing instead of for boiling or stewing.[47] For example, a passage in the *Odyssey* (3.461–72) describes the sacrifice of an ox, followed by the grilling and consumption of the meat: "But when the thighs were burnt up and they had tasted the vital parts, they cut up the rest and stuck it on spits

44. Susan Sherratt, "Feasting in Homeric Epic," in *The Mycenean Feast* (ed. J. C. Wright; Princeton, NJ: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2004) 181–217 (here, p. 214). Also see Montanari, *Food Is Culture*, 49; Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 131.

45. See Eleni M. Hatzaki ("Well 576: The Pottery Deposits and Ceramic Sequence," in *Palaikastro: Two Late Minoan Wells* [ed. J. A. Macgillivray, H. Sackett, and J. Driessen; London: British School at Athens, 2007] 15–94), who notes that burning on the exteriors of the tripod cooking pots suggests they were set next to a fire rather than directly above it (p. 91).

46. Penelope A. Mountjoy, *Mycenean Pottery: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1993) 118; Mervyn R. Popham, *The Minoan Unexplored Mansion at Knossos* (Athens: British School of Archaeology at Athens, 1984) 174.

47. Sherratt, "Feasting in Homeric Epic," 306, 312, 314. Also see Athenaeus 2.37–38 (in Olson, *The Learned Banqueters*, LCL 1:217), who says that in the old days there were two types of tripods, both referred to as cauldrons: one used for heating bath water over a fire and the other as a krater for mixing wine.

and roasted it, holding the sharp spits in their hands. . . . So, when they had roasted the upper flesh and pulled it [from the spits], they sat and ate, and good men waited on them, pouring wine in golden cups."[48] Sherratt suggests that after ca. 1000 B.C.E. the warrior elite began feasting on grilled meat on skewers, replacing the Bronze Age custom of boiling chunks of meat in tripod cauldrons.[49]

Sherratt's observation is supported by the iron spits and firedogs found in Iron Age warrior burial contexts and the apparent disappearance of clay tripod cauldrons during the early Iron Age.[50] The ceramic assemblage from the Protogeometric building at Toumba (Lefkandi) still includes tripod cauldrons as well as *pyraunoi*, a type of composite cooking pot and stand.[51] However, most of the cooking vessels appear to be *chytrae*—one- or two-handled cooking pots with a tall and slightly constricted but wide neck, flaring rim, and rounded body with a flat base.[52]

In fifth-century B.C.E. Athens, grilled meat was still associated with feasting, although the diners were now public officials instead of a warrior elite. Evidence comes from a pottery deposit in a pit in the Athenian Agora, which yielded debris from a public dining room. In addition to the high proportion of drinking vessels (as well as vessels associated with the mixing and serving of wine), the most common cooking vessels in the deposit are *escharai*, which were designed for grilling meat on skewers.[53] As Susan Rotroff and John Oakley remark, "The large number of *escharai* suggests that meat prepared in this manner was often served. . . . The numerous animal bones

48. From Andrew Dalby, *Siren Feasts: A History of Food and Gastronomy in Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 60.

49. Sherratt, "Feasting in Homeric Epic," 314; in n. 48, she notes the presence of approximately 30 clay tripod cooking vessels in two rooms at Pylos.

50. For spits and firedogs in Iron Age warrior burials, see ibid., 312; John Nicolas Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977) 146–48. For the possible survival of tripod cooking pots on Crete through the "Dark Ages," see Popham, *The Minoan Unexplored Mansion at Knossos*, 174.

51. R. W. V. Catling and Irene S. Lemos, *Lefkandi*, vol. 2/1: *The Protogeometric Building at Toumba: The Pottery* (British School of Archaeology Supplement 22; Oxford: British School of Archaeology, 1991) 57–61; pls. 42:860, 75:860, 78:847.

52. Ibid., 58–59; pls. 41:824–28; 76:824–28; 77:826, 829–42.

53. Susan I. Rotroff and John H. Oakley, *Debris from a Public Dining Place in the Athenian Agora* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1992) 46–47.

noted at the time of excavation also support the conclusion that meat was not an unusual item."[54]

Greek *chytrae* of the Iron Age and later not only lack tripod feet but sometimes have rounded bases, indicating that they were placed on stands by a hearth or on built installations such as stoves. The tall, relatively constricted necks of *chytrae* could not have accommodated chunks of meat easily, suggesting that they were used for boiling meatless soups and gruels. This is also indicated by the everted rim, which allowed the pot's contents to be poured out.[55] The fact that these pots were not designed for cooking meat is indicated by finds from Sardis in Asia Minor. There, chytrae were buried in Asia Minor with puppy bones in deposits dating from the late seventh century to the early to mid-fifth century B.C.E. Crawford Greenewalt Jr. notes that "the puppies would hardly have fitted into the pots unless at least skinned, gutted, and jointed, and even so they might have been a fairly tight fit."[56]

Around 500 B.C.E., a new variant appeared in Greece: a wide-mouthed, squat, lidded *chytra* with horizontal handles and a spout. Brian Sparkes and Lucy Talcott observe that these lidded *chytrae* were ideal for stewing, with the spouts providing outlets for steam.[57] This type is also found in the fifth-century deposit published by Rotroff and Oakley.[58] The appearance of lidded *chytrae* might indicate that stewing meat became more common at this time. Fragment 68 of Nicander's *Georgics*, preserved by Athenaeus (3.126b–c) provides a recipe for boiling meat stew in a lidded pot:

54. Ibid., 47.

55. For *chytrae* of the Late Geometric period from Lefandi, see Mervyn R. Popham and L. Hugh Sackett, eds., *Lefkandi*, vol. 1: *The Iron Age: The Settlement* (Oxford: British School of Archaeology at Athens, 1980) pl. 41. For examples dating to the second half of the eighth and seventh centuries from the Athenian Agora, see Eva T. H. Brann, *The Athenian Agora*, vol. 8: *Late Geometric and Proto-attic Pottery* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1962) 54–55 (*kadoi* and cooking jugs) and pl. 11. For examples of the sixth–fourth centuries from the Athenian Agora, see Brian A. Sparkes and Lucy Talcott, *The Athenian Agora*, vol. 12: *Black and Plain Pottery of the 6th, 5th and 4th Centuries B.C.* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1970) 224–26; fig. 18; pls. 93–94.

56. Crawford H. Greenewalt Jr., *Ritual Dinners in Early Historic Sardis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) 26; the *chytrae* differ from typical mainland Greek specimens by having handles that rise above the rim.

57. Sparkes and Talcott, *Black and Plain Pottery*, 225.

58. Rotroff and Oakley, *Debris from a Public Dining Place*, 48.

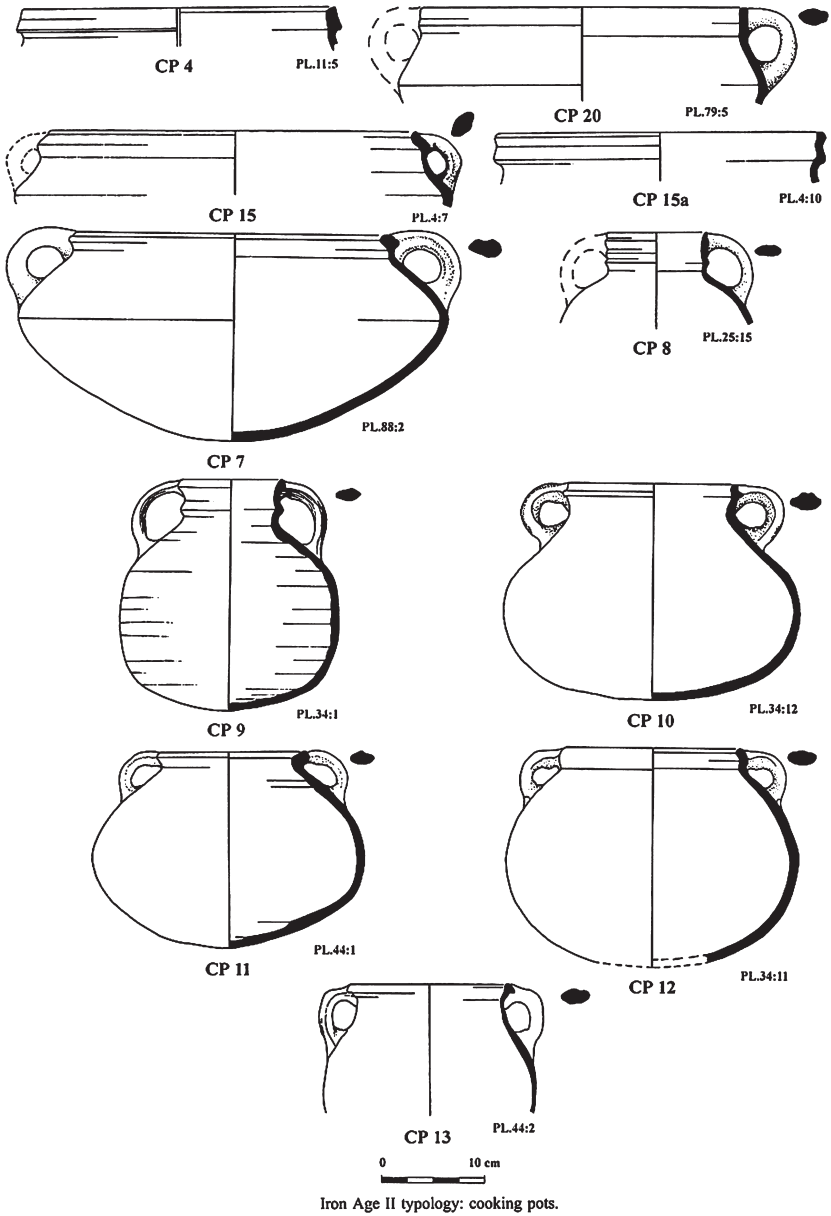

Fig. 1. Cooking pot types characteristic of southern Palestine in the Iron Age (from Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, *Timnah [Tel Batash]*, 2:82, fig. 5). Reproduced with the permission of Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen.

> But when you prepare a freshly slaughtered kid or a lamb or even a bird for eating, grind some rough-milled wheat and sprinkle it into hollow vessels, and mix it up together with fragrant oil. When the broth is seething dumping it down (?) . . . and smother it by clamping on a lid; for the heavy barley-meal swells as it cooks. And after it has cooled down, feast on it with hollow *mustra*.[59]

Furthermore, Andrew Dalby points out that the ancient Greeks themselves noticed changes in dining habits and diet over time.[60] For example, Athenaeus (1.12b–c) observes that, in the Homeric epics, "[T]he dinners consisted of roast meat only. Homer did not make broth when he sacrificed cattle, and he didn't stew the meat or the brains, but he used to roast even the entrails. That's how extraordinarily old-fashioned he was."[61] Thus, pottery and literary sources provide evidence of changes in culinary practices.

5. Dining on Meat in Iron Age Palestine

In contrast to Greece, the custom of boiling meat in broth in Palestine continued from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age, as indicated by the shapes of cooking pots. The typical native cooking pot, which first appeared in the Middle Bronze Age, has a squat, shallow body with a short neck and wide mouth.[62] Bronze Age cooking pots lack handles and were gripped under the triangular rim, but in the early Iron Age, the rim was shortened, and two vertical handles were added.[63] This type of cooking pot remained common at sites around Palestine through the eighth century B.C.E. (see fig. 1:7).[64]

The popularity of the Palestinian cooking pot with a squat, shallow body and wide mouth must be due to the fact that it was a versatile form that could be used to prepare dishes with chunks of meat as well as lentils, barley, and vegetable-based gruels, soups, and stews. The thickened, in-curved rim suggests that the contents were

59. From Olson, *The Learned Banqueters*, 2:103; also see Dalby, *Siren Feasts*, 59.

60. Dalby, *Siren Feasts*, 22.

61. From Olson, *The Learned Banqueters*, 1:67; also see Athenaeus 1.80–81; 5.57–58.

62. See Ruth Amiran, *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Massada, 1969) 101, pl. 30 (Middle Bronze Age).

63. See Amiran, *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land*, 137, pl. 42 (LB); 228–29, pl. 75 (Iron Age).

64. Amihai Mazar and Nava Panitz-Cohen, *Timnah (Tel Batash)*, vol. 2: *The Finds from the First Millennium BCE* (2 vols.; Qedem 42; Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 2001) 84 (CP 7); see parallels and citations provided.

removed with a cup or ladle rather than being poured out. The pot's rounded base was designed to be set on the opening at the top of a cylindrical or squat clay oven (*tannur* or *tabun*).[65]

According to biblical conceptions, sacrificial meat should be boiled. The episode involving the evil sons of the priest Eli describes how sacrificial meat was boiled: "When anyone offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot" (1 Sam 2:13–14).[66] Similarly, in the Priestly ordinances, God commands Aaron and his sons to boil sacrificial meat before eating it: "You shall take the ram of ordination, and boil its flesh in a holy place; and Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram" (Exod 29:31–32).[67]

Ezekiel (46:20, 23), although clearly not from an Iron Age context, is shown "the place where the priests shall boil the guilt offering and the sin offering" and "the kitchens where those who serve at the temple shall boil the sacrifices of the people." The later 4QMMT, the Halakic Letter from Qumran, refers to sacrificial meat in the Jerusalem temple as being boiled in broth in bronze cauldrons: "[And concerning the sacrifice of the sin-offering] which they cook in vessels [of bronze . . .] the flesh of their sacrifices and [. . .] in the courtyard [. . .] with the broth of their sacrifices" (4Q394 frags. 3–7, col. I, lines 8–9).[68]

65. See Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World*, 47–48; Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 67. David Ben-Shlomo et al. ("Cooking Identities: Aegean-Style Cooking Jugs and Cultural Interaction in Iron Age Philistia and Neighboring Regions," *AJA* 112 [2008] 225–46) question whether ovens could have accommodated cooking pots (p. 235 n. 60); for a discussion, see Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 108–9. For the differences between a *tannur* and *tabun*, see ibid., 107–9, 119–25; Yehuda, "Cooking and Food in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," [54–56] 88; and Alison McQuitty ("Ovens in Town and Country," *Berytus* 41 [1993/94] 53–76), who notes that *tannur*-type ovens seem to have been more widespread in Mesopotamia than Palestine in all periods (p. 70). For the use of the *tannur* in early Islamic cooking for baking bread and simmering pots with stews, see Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 38–39.

66. For the terms used to describe these vessels, see King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 65.

67. All biblical passages quoted are from the NRSV. For evidence of boiled sacrificial meat at ancient Greek sanctuaries, see Ekroth, "Meat in Ancient Greece," 267–68.

68. From Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 791.

The preparation of the meat at Passover is an exception, at least in one text. Whereas Deut 16:7 mandates that the Passover sacrifice is to be "boiled and eaten," the Priestly legislation (P) in Exodus requires that the paschal lamb be roasted, with specific instructions not to boil the meat: "They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs" (Exod 12:8–9).[69] This tradition of boiling sacrificial meat matches the archaeological record at Tel Dan, which, although located in the Israelite-Aramean border region, displays strong connections to biblical (Priestly) sacrificial ordinances. The various wide-mouthed cooking pots discovered in the Iron Age II sanctuary appear to have been used for boiling chunks of meat, as an analysis of the associated animal bones suggests.[70]

In the eighth century B.C.E., a new type of cooking pot appeared in Judah that is distinguished by its smaller size, globular body, and tall, narrow, multiridged neck with two loop handles (see fig. 1:8).[71] During the seventh century, this type was replaced by a similar cooking pot with single-ridged neck, which Amihai Mazar describes as "the hallmark of the late seventh century in Judah. . . . This type is not found outside Judah, even at nearby Gezer and Tel Miqne. It marks Tel Batash as the westernmost border of distribution for this Judean

69. The conflicting legislation in Exodus and Deuteronomy is conflated by the Chronicler, who says, "They boiled the Passover lamb with fire" (2 Chr 35:13); for discussions, see Marc Z. Brettler, *How to Read the Bible* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2005) 135; Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012) 15. The author of the *Temple Scroll* ignored this discrepancy altogether, whereas *Jubilees* (49:13) follows the legislation in Exodus; see Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983) 1:96; Robert H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913) 80. For the dating of P and D, see nn. 90 and 102 below.

70. Greer, "Dinner at Dan," 70; see p. 104 for evidence that the food was served directly from the cooking pots. Joel D. Klenck ("Bedouin Animal Sacrifice Practices: Case Study in Israel," in *The Symbolic Role of Animals in Archaeology* [ed. K. Ryan and P. J. Crabtree; MASCA Research Papers in Science and Archaeology 12; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1995] 57–72 [here, pp. 63–64]) documents animal sacrifices by Bedouin in which bones with meat are boiled in a large pot filled with water.

71. According to Amihai Mazar, this type is limited to Judean sites (it is also represented at Tel Batash, where it is scarce); see Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, *Timnah (Tel Batash)*, 2:82, figs. 5 and 85:8; also see p. 183 n. 18, where they dismiss the claim of an earlier example of this type from Arad.

type" (see fig. 1:9).[72] Another common type of cooking pot found in Judahite assemblages of the late seventh and early sixth centuries has a globular body, constricted neck, narrow mouth, and simple everted rim (see fig. 1:11).[73] In contrast, at the northern site of Tel Yoqneʿam, for example, the late Iron Age cooking pot type is related to the earlier squat, shallow cooking pots with wide mouth and thickened rim.[74] The characteristic seventh-century cooking pot type found at Tel Batash, Tel Miqne–Ekron, and Mesad Hashavyahu (sites located to the west of Judah) has a deep, rounded body and a short or medium-high constricted neck with a pinched ridge (see fig. 1:10).[75]

In Judah and the surrounding areas in the seventh century, all of the cooking pot types appear to be smaller in size and have a smaller rim diameter than their predecessors. Whereas the mouths of earlier cooking pots typically measure 22–42 cm or more in diameter, the mouths of seventh-century cooking pots rarely exceed ca. 15–20 cm in diameter.[76] The mouths of Judahite cooking pots, which typically measure between 7.5 and 13 cm in diameter are even smaller than their counterparts in surrounding areas and clearly were not designed to accommodate chunks of meat.[77] The constricted neck

72. Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, *Timnah (Tel Batash)*, 2:85 and 82, fig. 5:9; also see Irit Yezerski, "The Pottery of Stratum V," in *En-Gedi Excavations I: Conducted by B. Mazar and I. Dunayevsky: Final Report (1961–1965)* (ed. E. Stern; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2007) 86–129, type CP 1, described as common in Judah as early as the mid-seventh century (p. 91).

73. See Mazar and Panitz-Cohen (*Timnah [Tel Batash]*, 2:86–87, CP 11), who describe this type as "one of the hallmarks of the late 7th–early 6th centuries in Judea." Also see Yezerski, "The Pottery of Stratum V," 91–92, types CP 2 and 3.

74. See Anabel Zarzecki-Peleg, Shlomit Cohen-Anidjar, and Amnon Ben-Tor, "Pottery Analysis," in *Yoqneʿam*, vol. 2: *The Iron Age and the Persian Period Final Report of the Archaeological Excavations (1977–1988)* (Qedem Report 6; A. Ben-Tor, A. Zarzecki-Peleg, and S. Cohen-Anidjar; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2005) 235–344, CP 6C (pp. 278–79).

75. Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, *Timnah (Tel Batash)*, 2:86–88, CP 10; also see CP 12.

76. See, for example, Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, ibid., 2:80–87, CP 4, 7, 10; Zarzecki-Peleg, Cohen-Anidjar, and Ben-Tor, "Pottery Analysis," 278, CP 6C; Ben-Shlomo et al., "Cooking Identities," 227, fig. 2; 238–39 and fig. 10.

77. See, for example, Mazar and Panitz-Cohen, *Timnah (Tel Batash)*, 2:82–87, CP 8, CP 9, CP 11. Shafer-Elliott (*Food in Ancient Judah*, 107–8) describes the Bronze–Iron Age cooking pots with a squat, shallow body and wide mouth as the "traditional type," and the eighth–seventh-century cooking pots with a globular body and narrow mouth as the "hybrid" type (that is, a hybrid between the "traditional type" and Philistine-style cooking jugs). She notes (pp. 67, 73, 97, 107, 162) that, unlike the "traditional type," the "hybrid type" could not have

must have been intended to minimize evaporation and spillage. The small mouth and deep, globular body suggest that these cooking pots were used for boiling meatless soups, gruel, and lentils. The everted rims were designed so that the contents could be poured out. Unlike in Greece, there is no evidence that grilling replaced boiling as the preferred method of preparing meat in Iron Age Judah. This evidence suggests that meat—which even in the best of times was never a common element of the ancient diet—was hardly consumed in seventh-century B.C.E. Judah.

The smaller size of seventh-century cooking pots also suggests a reduction in the amount of food consumed, and therefore the number of diners participating in a meal. Baruch Halpern provides one possible explanation for this development, connecting this phenomenon with the centralization of cult and authority under Hezekiah and Josiah, which, he argues, resulted in the disintegration of Judah's rural clans (traditional extended households).[78] However, this explanation does not account for the smaller size of cooking pots outside Judah, unless similar social changes affected surrounding areas. Even if Halpern's theory is correct, it does not explain why cooking pots in seventh-century Judah have narrow mouths, whereas in surrounding areas other types with wider mouths continue to be attested as well.[79]

accommodated chunks of meat (although it could perhaps have accommodated "some smaller amounts of meat" [p. 107]).

78. Baruch Halpern, *From Gods to God: The Dynamics of Iron Age Cosmologies* (FAT 63; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 404; see also Ben-Shlomo et al., "Cooking Identities," 238–39

79. Shafer-Elliott (*Food in Ancient Judah*, 109–13) suggests that cooking pots with a squat, shallow body and large mouth (her "traditional type") are characteristic of dwellings in fortified settlements in the Iron Age IIB–C (eighth–seventh centuries B.C.E.), whereas small cooking pots with globular body and narrow opening (her "hybrid type") and Philistine-style cooking jugs are associated with rural dwellings. She understands this as evidence that urban populations had more access to meat than rural populations, who depended on their livestock for secondary products. Shafer-Elliott bases these conclusions on a comparison of four Iron Age IIB–C sites, two urban and two rural: Lachish, Tel Halif, Khirbet er-Ras, and Pisgat Zeʿev. However, her sample includes no Iron Age IIC cooking vessels from Lachish (p. 77) and only one supposed "traditional type" cooking pot from an Iron IIC context at Tel Halif (unpublished), of which only the bottom half is preserved (and therefore the type cannot be identified with certainty; see p. 90). At the two rural sites, only a "hybrid type" and Philistine-style cooking jugs are reported from Iron Age IIC contexts.

Small cooking pots with narrow mouths are not well suited to cooking chunks of meat, suggesting that meat consumption around the country declined in the seventh century. This may support Paula Wapnish's observation—based on the analysis of animal bones from Tell Jemmeh, Tel Miqne, and Ashkelon—that prime-age animals were exported to Assyria in the seventh century to pay tribute or were requisitioned by Assyrian military personnel in the region.[80] She concludes:

> [P]roducers sell what they cannot afford to eat. It seems reasonable to conclude that the shape of the animal economy resulted from special demands on the pastoral producers. Assyrian markets and Assyrian tribute demands may have been too attractive to permit the local consumption of highly marketable resources.[81]

Similarly, Moshe Elat emphasizes the unidirectional movement of tribute and loot taken by the Assyrians from the lands they conquered.[82] Avi Faust and Ehud Weiss have suggested that, in the seventh century, Judah specialized in growing grain for export to other regions, supplemented by the herding of animals.[83]

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80. See Paula Wapnish, "Archaeozoology: The Integration of Faunal Data with Biblical Archaeology," in *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, June–July 1990* (ed. A. Biran and J. Aviram; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993) 426–42 (here, pp. 435–40); idem, "Is *ṣēnī ana lā māni* an Accurate Description or a Royal Boast?" 285–96. For Ashkelon, see Brian Hesse, Deirdre N. Fulton, and Paula Wapnish, "Animal Remains," in *Ashkelon 3: The Seventh Century B.C.* (ed. L. E. Stager, D. M. Master, and J. David Schloen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 615–43 (here, p. 634); also see Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 63–64.

81. Wapnish, "Archaeozoology," 439; also see idem, "Is *ṣēnī ana lā māni* an Accurate Description or a Royal Boast?" 293.

82. Moshe Elat, "The Economic Relations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire with Egypt," *JAOS* 98 (1978) 20–34 (here, p. 20). For the extent of Egyptian versus Neo-Assyrian influence on the Philistine and Judahite economies in the second half of the seventh century, see Lawrence E. Stager, "Ashkelon on the Eve of Destruction in 604 B.C." in *Ashkelon 3: The Seventh Century B.C.* (ed. L. E. Stager, D. M. Master, and J. D. Schloen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 3–11 (here, pp. 7, 10); Aren M. Maeir, "Review of *Ashkelon 3: The Seventh Century B.C.*," *BASOR* 368 (2012) 112–16 (here, p. 115).

83. Avi Faust and Ehud Weiss, "Judah, Philistia, and the Mediterranean World: Reconstructing the Economic System of the Seventh Century B.C.E.," *BASOR* 338 (2005) 71–92 (here, pp. 75, 82 n. 17); Ehud Weiss, Mordechai E. Kislev, and Yael Mahler-Slasky, "Plant Remains," in *Ashkelon 3: The Seventh Century B.C.* (ed. L. E. Stager, D. M. Master, and J. D. Schloen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns) 591–613 (here, pp. 606–7).

The variable faunal evidence from other sites in the region complicates this picture. At Lachish, there is a marked increase in the proportion of sheep to goats in Iron IIB–C contexts (eighth–seventh centuries), with a high level of survivorship into adulthood. This suggests that, instead of being slaughtered for meat, many sheep and goats were raised for their by-products.[84] Paul Croft understands the dominance of adult sheep as evidence that wool production became an important part of Lachish's economy in the latter part of the Iron Age. He also notes that cattle increase steadily in number at Lachish beginning in the Iron Age IIA until the Persian/Hellenistic periods, when they outnumber caprines.[85] A similar long-term pattern is evident at other sites in the region, including Tel Halif, Tel Miqne, and Tel Harasim.[86] Of all the periods represented at Lachish, during Iron Age IIB–C, cattle had "by far" the highest occurrence of death as sub-adults, with low mortality rates for infant, juvenile, and adult animals. The culling of well-grown but not old cattle suggests an emphasis on beef production, because the most cost-effective time for meat production occurs around adolescence.[87] The picture presented by Croft for the late Iron Age accords with Wapnish's observations regarding the high level of survivorship of sheep into adulthood. However, at this time there is also an increase in the proportion of cattle to caprines, many of which were slaughtered as sub-adults, presumably to supply local markets. In other words, the archaeozoological evidence varies from site to site and can be interpreted differently.[88] While there seem to be changes in the faunal

84. Paul Croft, "Archaeozoological Studies, Section A: The Osteological Remains (Mammalian and Avian)," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)*, vol. 5 (ed. D. Ussishkin; Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004) 2254–52 (here, pp. 2268, 2270). Justin S. E. Lev-Tov ("A Preliminary Report on the Late Bronze and Iron Age Faunal Assemblages from Tell es-Safi/Gath," in *Tell es-Safi/Gath I: The 1996–2005 Seasons*, vol. 1: *Text* [ed. A. M. Maeir; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012] 589–612) observes that the Iron Age IIB (eighth-century) animal bone assemblage from Tell es-Safi (Philistine Gath) seems to reflect a specialized economy that produced surplus sheep for outside markets (pp. 598, 602). For a similar picture at Tel Halif, see Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 81.

85. Croft, "Archaeozoological Studies," 2263.

86. Ibid., 2264; also see Hesse, Fulton, and Wapnish ("Animal Remains," 632, 634), who note that cattle are not as abundant at Ashkelon as at other sites in the region.

87. Croft, "Archaeozoological Studies," 2279.

88. For example, Aharon Sasson (*Animal Husbandry in Ancient Israel: A Zooarchaeological Perspective on Livestock Exploitation, Herd Management and Economic*

record at sites in and around Judah during the latter part of the Iron Age compared with the preceding and following periods, more data and greater chronological resolution are needed before the significance of these changes can be determined. The available data by themselves do not support a simple conclusion.

Considering the inconclusive nature of the data, one may consider the possibility that factors other than a shortage of available animals contributed to the apparent disappearance of meat from the Judahite diet in the seventh century, because the distribution of cooking pot types suggests that some boiled meat was still being consumed in neighboring areas. For example, the ceramic assemblage from the coastal site of Mesad Hashavyahu includes the local globular cooking pots with constricted neck and everted or pinched rim together with Greek *chytrae* and large cauldrons that would have been suitable for boiling chunks of meat.[89] Perhaps the disappearance of meat from the seventh-century Judahite diet can be understood better in light of a prohibition in the Hebrew Bible's Holiness Code (H):

> The Lord spoke to Moses: Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the people of Israel and say to them: This is what the Lord has commanded. If anyone of the house of Israel slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or slaughters it outside the camp, and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to present it as an offering to the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord, he shall be held guilty of bloodshed; he has shed blood, and he shall be cut off from the people. (Lev 17:1–4)

This legislation prohibits the slaughter of nonsacrificial animals and permits the consumption of meat only if animals have been sacrificed as "Holy Things" (*qodĕšîm*) on the altar. Milgrom dates H to the preexilic period and suggests that the prohibition against nonsacrificial slaughter, "if enacted at all—could not have lasted very long."[90]

Strategies [London: Equinox, 2010] 41–42, 86) argues that southern Levantine pastoralists regularly slaughtered sub-adult male animals as part of a survival subsistence strategy and not in response to market forces, and that there is no evidence of a specialized economy in the Bronze and Iron Ages.

89. See Joseph Naveh, "The Excavations at Mesad Hashavyahu: Preliminary Report," *IEJ* 12 (1962) 89–113; see figs. 5:1–4; 6:7–9; Alexander Fantalkin, "Meṣad Ḥashavyahu: Its Material Culture and Historical Background," *TA* 28 (2001) 3–165 (see pp. 86–87, types CP 1–2, e.g.; on p. 116, he notes that the assemblage contained 33 Greek cooking pots and only 15 local pots).

90. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 1361–64, esp. p. 1453; see p. 1463 for the suggestion that this legislation was idealizing and utopian. Schol-

Nonetheless, could it be that Zechariah's postexilic eschatological vision of Jerusalem, according to which all cooking pots in Judea will be used to boil sacrificial meat in the temple, is not entirely fantasy but has some basis in a preexilic reality?[91]

> And the cooking pots in the house of the Lord shall be as holy as the bowls in front of the altar; and every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and use them to boil the flesh of the sacrifice. (Zech 14:20–21)

Leviticus's ban (if enacted), together with the closing or destruction of altars and sanctuaries outside Jerusalem during the late eighth and seventh centuries, in effect would have eliminated meat from the Judahite diet. Evidence from the Arad temple might support this scenario, because its sacrificial altar was abolished in Stratum VIII (late eighth century), perhaps as part of Hezekiah's reforms; and in the following stratum (VII; seventh century), the temple was eliminated altogether.[92] The excavators note that the "pottery repertoire of Stratum VII is radically different from that of the previous strata" and now includes the globular cooking pots with a constricted, single-ridged neck.[93]

ars disagree about whether the Priestly Code (P) and H are entirely postexilic in date or whether all or part of these sources are preexilic. For summaries with references, see Jeffrey Stackert (*Rewriting the Torah: Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation* [FAT 52; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007] 12–18), who believes that H is subsequent to P and D (Deuteronomy) and that it cannot antedate the very end of the seventh century. Israel Knohl (*The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995] 204–9) argues that H postdates P and antedates D; he associates the legislation in H with Hezekiah's reforms and D with Josiah. Also see Aren Maeir, " 'And Brought in the Offerings and the Tithes and the Dedicated Things Faithfully' (2 Chron. 31:12): On the Meaning and Function of the Late Iron Age Judahite 'Incised Handle Cooking Pots,' " *JAOS* 130 (2010) 43–62 (here, pp. 53–54); Greer, "Dinner at Dan," 85 n. 296. Both Maeir and Greer conclude that P and H preserve or incorporate traditions and practices that originated before 586 B.C.E.

91. See Maier, "And Brought in the Offerings and the Tithes," 49.

92. Zeev Herzog et al., "The Israelite Fortress at Arad," *BASOR* 254 (1984) 1–34 (see pp. 19–22); Zeev Herzog, "Perspectives on Southern Israel's Cult Centralization: Arad and Beer-sheba," in *One God – One Cult – One Nation* (ed. R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann; BZAW 405; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010) 169–99. For the argument that Hezekiah's reform never occurred, see Juha Pakkala, "Why the Cult Reforms in Judah Probably Did Not Happen," in ibid., 201–35 (see esp. pp. 213–17). However, Maeir ("And Brought in the Offerings and the Tithes," 50–52) notes strong evidence of cultic centralization in late Iron Age Judah; also see Halpern, *From Gods to God*, 340–424; Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence*, 204–9.

93. Herzog et al., "The Israelite Fortress at Arad," 23.

Could it be that Leviticus's ban was enacted because the export of so many prime-age animals from Judah resulted in a shortage of sacrificial victims for the Jerusalem temple?[94] Perhaps part of the shortfall of meat in the local diet was made up by species that could not be offered for sacrifice—specifically, chickens, fish, and wild game. Baruch Rosen has suggested that chickens became increasingly common in the Iron Age II, although more-recent evidence seems to indicate that chickens remained rare throughout this period.[95] Another part of the shortfall might have been made up by fish. Eighty-five percent of the fish bones published from Yigal Shiloh's excavations in the City of David (215 identifiable bones) come from Iron Age II contexts and include marine species from the Mediterranean Sea as well as fresh-water species.[96] On the other hand, the number of fish bones (3,890) recovered in late seventh-century contexts at Ashkelon is relatively low for a major coastal site and port.[97] At Lachish, a much larger number and variety of fish are represented

94. Stackert (*Rewriting the Torah*, 139, 164, 221) argues that the laws in H and D were not actually practiced and were not meant to be enacted; also see Bernard M. Levinson and Jeffrey Stackert, "Between the Covenant Code and Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty," *JAJ* 3 (2012) 123–40 (see p. 126, discussing the legislation in Deuteronomy). However, the evidence presented here supports the possibility that the ban in Lev 17:1–4 reflects aspects of historical reality in late Iron Age Judah.

95. Baruch Rosen, "Subsistence Economy in Iron Age I," in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel* (ed. I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman; Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1994) 339–51 (here, p. 341); I thank J. P. Dessel for bringing this article to my attention. More recently, Croft ("Archaeozoological Studies," 2308) has noted that chickens are not common in Iron Age contexts at Lachish or other sites. Even poultry meat was a luxury for the poor; see Ziffer, "Setting Tables in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," [76].

96. Hanan Lernau and Omri Lernau, "Fish Remains," in *Excavations at the City of David 1978–1985 Directed by Yigal Shiloh*, vol. 3: *Stratigraphical, Environmental, and Other Reports* (ed. A. de Groot and D. T. Ariel; 7 vols.; Qedem 33; Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1992) 131–48 (see esp. p. 134). Ten thousand six hundred fish remains, over 90% of which are bream and mullet from the Mediterranean Sea were found in a late ninth–early eighth-century fill at the bottom of the rock-cut pool by the Gihon Spring; see Ronny Reich, *Excavating the City of David: Where Jerusalem's History Began* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2011) 216; Ronny Reich, Eli Shukron, and Omri Lernau, "Recent Discoveries in the City of David, Jerusalem," *IEJ* 57 (2007) 153–69 (see esp. pp. 157–60).

97. Omri Lernau, "Fish Remains," in *Ashkelon 3: The Seventh Century B.C.* (ed. L. E. Stager, D. M. Master, and J. D. Schloen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 645–57 (see p. 653).

in Late Bronze Age contexts than in Iron Age II.[98] Reports of a rise in the number of fallow deer bones in late Iron Age contexts at Tel Batash and in Jerusalem might indicate an increase in the hunting and consumption of wild animals.[99] The Holiness Code (Lev 17:13) and Deuteronomy (12:15–16, 21–24) allow permitted species of wild animals and birds to be slaughtered and consumed after the blood has been drained (and, according to Leviticus, covered with earth). However, Justin Lev-Tov has noted that wild mammals and birds are rare in faunal assemblages at Tell es-Safi and other sites in central and southern Palestine (Lachish, Tel Halif, Tel Miqne–Ekron, and possibly Beer-sheva).[100] In other words, similar to the evidence for cattle and caprines, evidence for the consumption of chickens, fish, and wild animals in late Iron Age Judah and neighboring areas varies from site to site and can be interpreted differently, but the quantities seem to be low.

The equivocal nature of the archaeozoological evidence leaves open the possibility that the appearance of new cooking pot types in seventh-century Judah was connected with market patterns under Assyrian rule and the implementation of a ban on the consumption of nonsacrificial meat.[101]

98. Omri Lernau, "Archaeozoological Studies, Section B: The Osteological Remains (Aquatic)," in *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)*, vol. 5 (David Ussishkin; Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2004), 2456–89 (see pp. 2483, 2485).

99. The published evidence is woefully inadequate. For Tel Batash, Halpern (*From Gods to God*, 377) cites an unpublished paper by Brian Hesse and Paula Wapnish: "A second indication of rural depopulation [in Judah] is physical: fallow deer become a staple at Tel Batashi in the seventh century, where it was previously insignificant. In one household, for example, it represents thirteen percent of the animal detritus." Liora K. Horwitz and Eitan Tchernov ("Subsistence Patterns in Ancient Jerusalem: A Study of Animal Remains," in *Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount, The Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem* [ed. E. Mazar and B. Mazar; Qedem 29; Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1989] 144–54] report that, although fallow deer are represented by only one bone from an Iron Age II context in Mazar's excavations around the Temple Mount, "a sizeable assemblage was identified from the City of David faunal assemblage" (p. 148). They cite a forthcoming publication, but the faunal reports on Shiloh's excavations in the City of David do not describe any such assemblage.

100. Lev-Tov, "A Preliminary Report on the Late Bronze and Iron Age Faunal Assemblages," 604, although the data seem to come mostly from contexts that antedate the seventh century. For Lachish, see Croft, "Archaeozoological Studies," 2291.

101. Leviticus's prohibition is reversed in Deuteronomy, which permits the slaughter and consumption of nonsacrificial animals outside Jerusalem. See Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1454–55.

Narrow-mouthed cooking pots are characteristic of Judah through the end of the Iron Age. If these cooking pots reflect the disappearance of meat from the Judahite diet in the seventh century, and if this phenomenon is connected with a ban on the consumption of nonsacrificial meat, it may suggest that the legislation embedded in H was observed in the seventh century and played a role in actual practice until 586 B.C.E.[102]

6. Epilogue: Dining on Meat in Postbiblical Palestine

Changes in pottery seem to indicate that, by the Persian period, meat had been reintroduced to the Judean diet. At this time, a new cooking pot type appeared in Judea (Yehud) and other parts of Palestine that had a round body with no neck and a hole mouth surrounded by a ledge for a dome-shaped lid.[103] The shape of the cooking pot and diameter of the mouth (ca. 20 cm) suggest that it was designed to accommodate chunks of meat as well as meatless soups, stews, and gruels.[104] However, the most common cooking pot type of the Persian period developed out of the late Iron Age tradition, with a large globular body, short neck, and relatively narrow mouth

102. For the suggestion that the oldest edition of Deuteronomy postdates 586, see Juha Pakkala, "The Date of the Oldest Edition of Deuteronomy," *ZAW* 121 (2009) 388–401; idem, "Why the Cult Reforms in Judah Probably Did Not Happen." For responses to Pakkala's dating, see Nathan MacDonald, "Issues in the Dating of Deuteronomy: A Response to Juha Pakkala," *ZAW* 122 (2010) 431–35; Levinson and Stackert, "Between the Covenant Code and Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty," 133–37. For the dating of D to the preexilic period, see Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1357; Stackert, "Rewriting the Torah," 17; Levinson and Stackert, "Between the Covenant Code and Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty," 125; Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence*, 204–9 (who associates D with Josiah). For a formulation of the traditional view in historical-critical scholarship, see Baruch A. Levine (*In the Presence of the Lord: A Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel* [Leiden: Brill, 1984] 49–52), who believes that H and P postdate D. However, Deuteronomy's apparent reversal of Leviticus's ban on the slaughter and consumption of nonsacrificial animals outside Jerusalem suggests that at least this element of the Holiness Code antedates D.

103. See Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538–332 B.C.* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982) 101–2, type E; idem, *En-Gedi Excavations I: Conducted by B. Mazar and I. Dunayevsky: Final Report (1961–1965)* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2007) 202; 218, fig. 5.2.4:9–10, type 2.

104. See Stern, *En-Gedi Excavations I*, 218, fig. 5.2.4:9–10; my estimate of the rim diameter is based on these illustrations.

(ca. 14 cm or less in diameter).[105] This remained the dominant cooking pot type in Palestine (with minor variations) during the Hellenistic period, perhaps indicating that the local diet consisted mainly of meatless (but not necessarily fowl-less or fish-less) soups, stews, and gruels.[106]

This paper shows how archaeological, literary, and zoological information can shed light on changes in dietary patterns, especially in the preparation and consumption of meat. Literary sources and archaeological evidence attest the centrality of meat in the diet of elites in the ancient and early Islamic East. Cooking pot types and ancient recipes provide evidence of a long tradition of boiling chunks of meat in the Near East and, in the early Islamic Period, the development of cooking pot types to reflect changes in cuisine. In comparison, in the Bronze Age Aegean it was customary to boil chunks of meat but, during the early Iron Age, Greek warrior elites began to dine on grilled meat instead—a change attested by literary sources and archaeological evidence. In Palestine, cooking pot types and biblical passages indicate that boiling chunks of meat, not grilling, was the customary method of preparation during the Bronze and Iron Ages. However, cooking pot types in Judah suggest that meat nearly disappeared from the local diet during the late Iron Age. This phenomenon contrasts with other regions and may be the result of market patterns under Assyrian rule and the observance of a biblical ban on the consumption of nonsacrificial meat.

105. See ibid., 202; 218, fig. 5.2.4:1–8; type 1; my estimate of the rim diameter is based on these illustrations.

106. The rarity of casseroles with lids at Jewish sites in Hellenistic Palestine suggests that, as in the late Iron Age, meat was almost absent from the local diet. Andrea M. Berlin ("The Plain Wares," in *Tel Anafa II, i: The Hellenistic and Roman Pottery* [ed. Sharon C. Herbert; Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement 10; Ann Arbor, MI: Kelsey Museum, 1997] 1–211) notes that lidded casseroles are represented only at sites such as Samaria, where Greek presence or influence is attested (pp. 94–95). Examples have also been found in Hasmonean-period contexts in Jerusalem and Jericho; see Berlin, "The Plain Wares," 95; Rachel Bar-Nathan, *Hasmonean and Herodian Palaces at Jericho: Final Reports of the 1973–1987 Excavations*, vol. 3: *The Pottery* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2002) 73–74, type J-CS1; for the narrow-necked cooking pots characteristic of the Hasmonean period, see pp. 68–72. During the reign of Herod, a new casserole type with a sharply carinated shoulder appeared at Jewish sites in Palestine and remained common through the first century C.E., suggesting changes in the local diet; see pp. 74–75, type J-CS3. The Hellenistic and early Roman periods deserve further consideration but lie beyond the scope of this paper.

Feasts on Many Occasions: Diversity in Mesopotamian Banquet Scenes during the Early Dynastic Period

Steve Renette

During the past decade, the study of feasting and commensality has significantly influenced anthropological and archaeological narratives about group identities and political strategies.[1] In Mesopotamian studies, this impact has been less invasive, despite a few important contributions.[2]

1. For a comprehensive overview, see Brian Hayden and Suzanne Villeneuve, "A Century of Feasting Studies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011) 433–49.

2. Marion Benz and Nina Wächtler, "Von der Integration zur Distinktion: Die feiernde Elite der Frühdynastischen Zeit," *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* 47 (2006) 463–83; Dominique Charpin, "Les usages politiques des banquet d'après les archives mésopotamiennes du début du IIe millénaire av. J.-C.," in *Le banquet du monarque dans le monde antique: Table des hommes* (ed. C. Grandjean, C. Hugoniot, and B. Lion; Rennes: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2013) 31–52; Piotr Michalowski, "The Drinking Gods: Alcohol in Mesopotamian Ritual and Mythology," in *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East* (ed. L. Milano; Padua: Sargon, 1994) 27–44; Susan Pollock, "Feasts, Funerals, and Fast Food in Early Mesopotamian States," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 17–38; idem, "Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces: An Introduction," *eTopoi Journal for Ancient Studies* Special Volume 2 (*Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Space*; 2012) 1–20; Licia Romano, "Banqueting in a Temple," in *Proceedings of the 7th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East: 12th April–16th April, the British Museum and UCL, London* (ed. R. Matthews and J. Curtis; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012) 269–81; idem, *Banchetto e Simposio nella Mesopotamia Protodinastica* (Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientale 14; Rome: La Sapienza, 2014); Denise Schmandt-Besserat, "Feasting in the Ancient Near East," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographical Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 391–403; Irene J. Winter, "Le banquet royal assyrien: Mise en oeuvre de la rhétorique de l'abondance," in *Le banquet du monarque dans le monde antique: Table des hommes* (ed. C. Grandjean, C. Hugoniot, and B. Lion; Rennes: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2013) 287–309.

However, there are very good reasons to explore the role of feasting in ancient Mesopotamia. The practice of feasting is ubiquitous in human societies throughout history and in the present day: commensality and the preoccupation with food and drink is a central part of human nature. Be it through hedonistic indulgence or implementing taboos and strict regulation, food production and consumption play an important part in any human society, far beyond mere subsistence or utilitarian purposes. As Dietler and Hayden have argued forcefully, feasting practices—that is, "the communal consumption of food and/or drink"[3]—have played a central role in the development of human societies. However, the usefulness of feasts "as a powerful, versatile, and subtle analytical tool capable of providing a window of entry into the diverse array of forms of political and economic action and social relations in ancient societies" has not yet been fully appreciated in Mesopotamian studies.[4]

In this contribution, I investigate the diversity of banquet imagery in Mesopotamian art in the second half of the third millennium B.C.E. I follow Dietler and Hayden in their assertion that it "is crucial to identify the *specific* nature of prehistoric feasts in *particular* cases and to explain how and why they operated in *specific socioeconomic contexts*" (emphasis mine).[5] I argue that this particularity of feasting practices finds an expression in differences of composition and style in ancient Mesopotamian art. The diversity in both imagery and the media that carry it reveals not only divergent practices but also different political messages during a time of rapid change in the constitution of power in Sumerian societies. This essay builds on early investigations of Mesopotamian feasts, which have focused on iconography and long-lasting artistic and ideological themes in Mesopotamian culture, leaving open the question of the diversity of both feasting practices and artistic representations of these practices.

An abundance of evidence exists from which to gain insights into ancient Mesopotamian feasting practices and their role in ancient

3. Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, "Digesting the Feast: Good to Eat, Good to Drink, Good to Think," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 1–20 (here, p. 3).

4. Ibid., 18.

5. Ibid.; see also a discussion of the variety of feasting practices within societies: Brian Hayden, "Fabulous Feasts: A Prolegomenon to the Importance of Feasting," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 23–64 (here, pp. 35–42).

societies.[6] Banquet scenes played an important role in both the literature and the visual arts in the ancient Near East from the end of the fourth millennium through the first millennium B.C.E.[7] Artistic manifestations of feasting behavior in Mesopotamian art are found on artifacts belonging overwhelmingly to the elite sphere, especially on cylinder seals made of valuable materials (imported stones, such as lapis lazuli) and votive stone relief plaques that are found in elite contexts (temples, royal burials, and palaces).

1. Mesopotamia in the Third Millennium B.C.E.: A Struggle for Power

In ancient Mesopotamia, highly centralized and institutionalized kingship developed only during the second half of the third millennium B.C.E. The kings of the Akkadian and Ur III empires served as a model for powerful kingship in ancient Mesopotamia. However, during the Early Dynastic I–II period (ca. 2900–2500 B.C.E.), ruling families of Sumerian city-states needed to negotiate their position and power within a heterarchical system consisting of large households and powerful temple institutions.[8] Imagery from these early

6. Unlike in many other disciplines, scholars of ancient Mesopotamia have access to large numbers of textual sources (in the form of literary texts, royal inscriptions, and administrative documents), an abundance of imagery (on artistic monuments, small works of art of a more utilitarian nature such as cylinder seals and furniture inlays, and mundane figurative artifacts such as figurines and low-relief clay plaques), and a growing body of archaeological evidence (for a recent overview, see Xavier Faivre, "La bière de la brasserie au cabaret: Approche archéologique," *Cahiers des Thèmes Transversaux d'ArScAn* 11 [2013] 375–92).

7. Dominique Collon, "Banquets in the Art of the Ancient Near East," in *Banquets d'Orient* (ed. R. Gyselen; Res Orientalis 4; Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilization du Moyen-Orient, 1992) 23–30; Michalowski, "The Drinking Gods"; Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, "The Banquet Scene in the Mesopotamian Debate Poems," in *Banquets d'Orient* (ed. R. Gyselen; Res Orientalis 4; Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilization du Moyen-Orient, 1992) 9–22.

8. By *heterarchy*, I mean a power structure that is not strictly hierarchical or pyramidal. In other words, at every horizontal political and economic level of society, several equally powerful entities operate independently. See most recently Seth Richardson, "Early Mesopotamia: The Presumptive State," *Past and Present* 215 (2012) 3–49; Marc Van de Mieroop, "Democracy and the Rule of Law, the Assembly and the First Law Code," in *The Sumerian World* (ed. H. Crawford; New York: Routledge, 2013) 277–88; Norman Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 22–90.

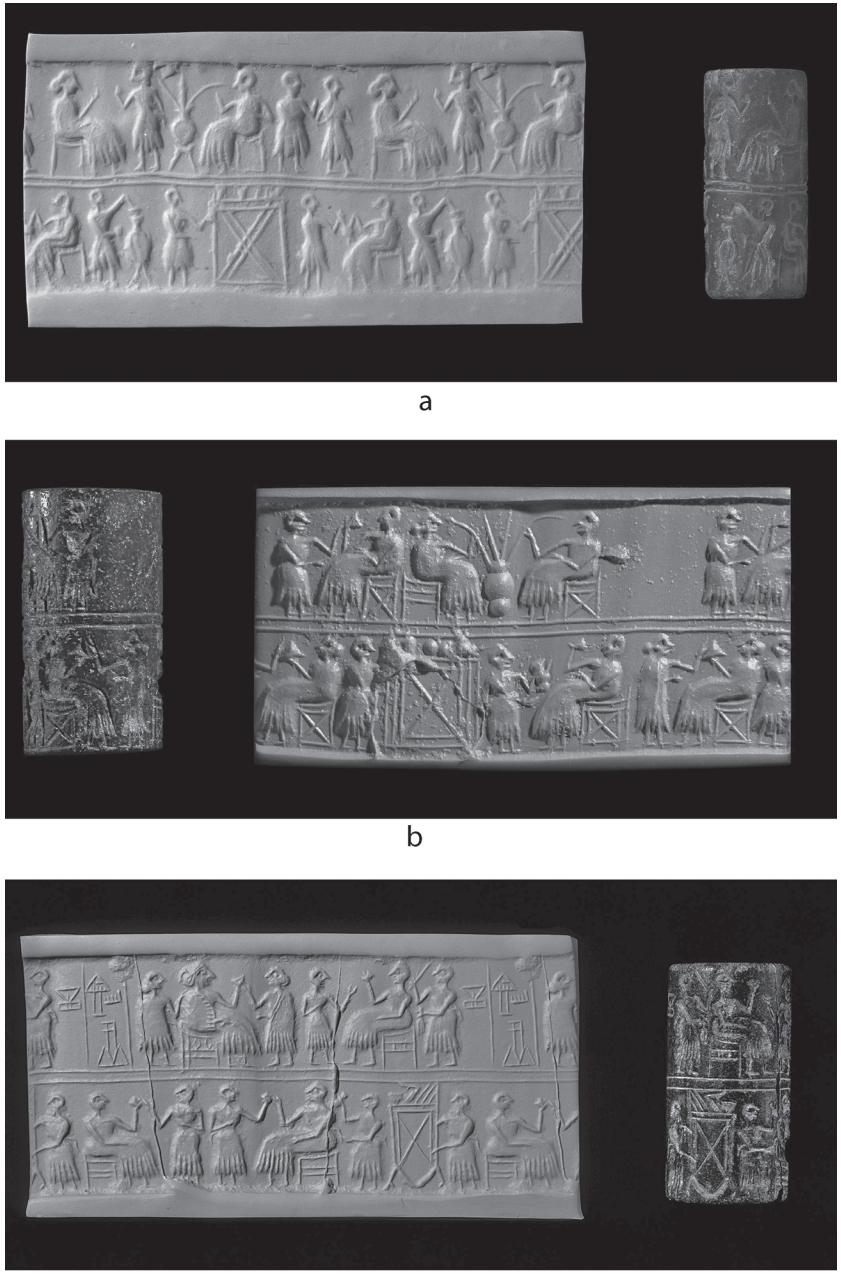

Fig. 1. Canonical Early Dynastic III banquet scene on cylinder seals (Royal Cemetery of Ur): (a) U.14443; (b) U.10871; (c) U.10939. All images reproduced courtesy of the British Museum.

centuries is marked by an immense diversity, depicting scenes that are often difficult to contextualize or read.[9] The Sumerian world itself was also politically divided, because southern Mesopotamia appears to have been made up of a patchwork of city-states.[10]

During the middle of the third millennium B.C.E., there is increasing evidence from inscriptions and artistic representations for military conflict between the Sumerian city-states along with the rise to power of individuals referring to themselves with the Sumerian titles lugal, ensi, or en—all of which designate some form of rulership.[11] The highest honor was to become lugal kish ("King of Kish"), a title awarded to men who were able to establish their hegemony over the majority of city-states in southern Mesopotamia.[12] This notion of intense political and military conflict with the goal to establish regional hegemony can also be seen in works of art such as the Stele of the Vultures, which shows Eannatum, the king of Lagash,

9. For a recent case study and the difficulty of interpreting early Mesopotamian art, see Gianni Marchesi and Nicolò Marchetti, *Royal Statuary of Early Dynastic Mesopotamia* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 14; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

10. Early seal impressions with groups of archaic cuneiform signs signifying names of cities suggest a form of cooperation between various city-states. These independent political units were possibly tied together in an overarching religious framework and perhaps even in an economic league: see Thorkild Jacobsen, "Toward the Image of Tammuz," *HR* 1 (1962) 189–213; Roger J. Matthews, *Cities, Seals and Writing: Archaic Seal Impressions from Jemdet Nasr and Ur* (Berlin: Mann, 1993); Piotr Steinkeller, "Archaic City Seals and the Question of Early Babylonian Unity," in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen* (ed. T. Abusch; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002) 249–57.

11. Each of these terms is usually translated "king." The semantic differences and the specific political roles of each of these titles are shrouded in obscurity. It is possible that by the mid-third millennium B.C.E. the use of these terms merely reflected regional differences in terminology. On the other hand, the term lugal, which literally means "big man," may be closer tied to a role as military leader, while en may refer more to the role of the king within the religious power structure. Ensi is later used as a title of "governors" of provinces within the Ur III Empire, suggesting an emphasis on the role of a steward and caretaker in the name of a higher entity (be it the king of the Ur III Empire or the supreme deity of the city-state pantheon).

12. While the specific meaning and background of the title lugal kish is still unclear, royal inscriptions indicate that it signified a hegemony over all of the southern Mesopotamian city-states after a series of important military victories; Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East ca. 3000–323* BC (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004) 50.

defeating his rival, Umma.[13] The inscription on the monument gives a detailed description of the history of the conflict between these two neighboring city-states, and it lists a long series of Eannatum's military victories. The idea of regional hegemony is also reflected in the Sumerian King List, which is a historical document from the end of the third millennium B.C.E. that lists consecutive rulers during the Early Dynastic period with the premise that only one city and its king can rule at any given time.[14]

The struggle for power also took place within the city-states, and it was accompanied by a proliferation in building ever-more-monumental architecture, rapid developments in the use of writing (e.g., the first historical records), and a standardization and elaboration of the use of visual arts.[15] In the city of Ur, rulers engaged in increasingly extravagant displays of their power and wealth as attested in the Royal Cemetery. The evidence of conspicuous consumption and human sacrifice in these tombs has led D. Dickson to coin the apt term "theatres of cruelty."[16] Members of the ruling family of Ur in the middle of the Early Dynastic III period (ca. 2500–2250 B.C.E.) were buried in large burial chambers along with enormous amounts of wealth. In addition, several burial chambers contained the remains of dozens of individuals in ornate dress who were killed during the burial rituals.[17] Practices of this sort did not have a long

13. Irene J. Winter, "After the Battle Is Over: The 'Stele of the Vultures' and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of the Ancient Near East," in *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (ed. H. L. Kessler and M. S. Simpson; Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1985) 11–32; Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*, 49.

14. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Piotr Michalowski, "History as Charter: Some Observations on the Sumerian King List," *JAOS* 103 (1983) 237–48; Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*, 43.

15. Joan Aruz, *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art / New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Henri Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954).

16. D. Bruce Dickson, "Public Transcripts Expressed in Theatres of Cruelty: The Royal Graves at Ur in Mesopotamia," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 16 (2006) 123–44.

17. The tombs contained jewels, vessels, tools, weapons, furniture, musical instruments, and seals—all made of valuable materials such as gold, silver, electrum, lapis lazuli, agate, and carnelian. The majority of these artifacts were made of material imported from the Iranian highlands. For detailed discussions and descriptions, see: Andrew C. Cohen, *Death Rituals, Ideology, and the*

history in ancient Mesopotamia but appear to have been unique to this time in Mesopotamian history. As such, both the Stele of the Vultures and the Royal Cemetery of Ur are evidence of the rise of powerful rulers who positioned themselves increasingly above the rest of society. Other works of art, royal inscriptions, and archaeological evidence (the beginning of a development toward palatial architecture) suggest that individuals and their families were devising strategies to manipulate the existing power structures and to concentrate power in their favor.[18] During the second half of the Early Dynastic III period, this led to kingship's becoming fully institutionalized and hereditary, with the ruler embodying the role of interlocutor between the city-state and the divine world. Interpolity competition and conflict continued, and kings with newly found power attempted to expand their influence beyond their borders. This process ultimately led to the establishment of the first empire; Sargon of Akkad conquered all of southern Mesopotamia and areas to the north, east, and west, while making the bold move to institutionalize and canonize this new constellation of power.

Royal inscriptions and works of art put the emphasis on the military achievements of Mesopotamian rulers, but these conflicts always took place between city-states. There is no evidence for the use of military power to seize control internally. So, for reconstruction of these internal politics, interpreters depend on indirect information from administrative records that mention the names and roles of institutions and individuals. For example, through a meticulous study of tablets detailing the management of a labor force from the site of Telloh, ancient Girsu, K. Maekawa demonstrates how the last rulers of the city-state at the end of the Early Dynastic period gained increasing control over the important É.MUNUS institution—the

Development of Early Mesopotamian Kingship: Toward a New Understanding of Iraq's Royal Cemetery of Ur (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Dickson, "Theatres of Cruelty"; Susan Pollock, "The Royal Cemetery of Ur: Ritual, Tradition, and the Creation of Subjects," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M. Heinz and M. H. Feldman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 89–110.

18. Aruz, *Art of the First Cities*; Joseph Bauer, Robert K. Englund, and Manfred Krebernik, *Mesopotamien: Späturuk-Zeit und frühdynastische Zeit* (OBO 160/1; Fribourg: Academic Press / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998); Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*, 39–82; Douglas R. Frayne, *Presargonic Period (2700–2350 BC)* (RIME 1; Toronto: University Press of Toronto, 2007); Marchesi and Marchetti, *Royal Statuary of Early Dynastic Mesopotamia*; Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near* East, 41–84.

House of the Woman, directed by the queen of the city-state of Lagash—and manipulated its organization to establish a personal connection with the divine world.[19]

The imagery on cylinder seals and other works of art in this period allow for the reconstruction of another strategy employed by Sumerian elites in the struggle for power: the organization of lavish feasts. Scenes showing groups of people engaging in festive, commensal activities became a popular theme in the art of southern Mesopotamia during the Early Dynastic I–II period (ca. 2900–2500 B.C.E.). During the Early Dynastic III period (ca. 2500–2250 B.C.E.), glyptic art consisted almost exclusively of highly canonized versions of banquet and combat scenes (fig. 1).[20] Toward the end of the Early Dynastic III period, glyptic art changed again: instead of displaying numerous participants and festive activities, banquet scenes of this period show only one or two individuals drinking, often in combination with elements invoking a ritualized setting, such as temple facades.[21] Eventually, banquet scenes all but disappeared from the repertoire, under the rule of the first Mesopotamian empires of Akkad and Ur III during the last centuries of the third millennium B.C.E., when presentation scenes that depicted an individual holding a cup and facing a seated deity became popular.

19. The É.MUNUS—literally meaning "House of the Woman"—was a cult institution in the state of Lagash led by the queen. The institution owned land and a labor force to fulfill its main responsibility, which was the organization of religious events in the ritual calendar. At the site of Telloh, ancient Girsu (a city in the state of Lagash), archaeologists found a large archive dating to the end of the Early Dynastic III period. This archive contains administrative documents dealing with the organization of the institution. For a detailed discussion, see Scott G. Beld, *The Queen of Lagash: Ritual Economy in a Sumerian State* (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2002); Kazuya Maekawa, "The Development of the É.MI in Lagash during Early Dynastic III," *Mesopotamia* 8–9 (1973–74) 77–144.

20. As can be seen in fig. 1, the banquet scenes of this period consisted of large groups of human figures engaging in commensal and festive activities (drinking, serving food, music, and dancing). The combat scenes depict one or two rows of animals (lions and bulls), humans, and mythical figures (bullman, naked hero) in close and interlocking physical combat. These two artistic themes dominate glyptic art during the Early Dynastic III period. However, the contrast between the two themes is striking. Some seals contain both sets of imagery (fig. 2e–f; Gudrun Selz, *Die Bankettszene: Entwicklung eines "überzeitlichen" Bildmotivs in Mesopotamien von der Frühdynastischen bis zur Akkad-Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1983) pls. 28, 327–34.

21. Ibid., pls. 32–36.

2. Study of Feasting in Mesopotamian Studies

A. Art-Historical Approaches to the Banquet Scenes

Depictions of Mesopotamian feasts spanning all historical periods attracted attention early on in Mesopotamian studies, as G. Selz documents in her seminal work on third-millennium banquet scenes.[22] However, many studies have concerned themselves with the development of typologies rather than the meanings of the themes and purposes of their usage. For example, in terms of methodology, the first sentence of Selz's work explicitly marks it as a study of the *motif* commonly referred to as *banquet scenes*.[23] While she does make some reference to the interpretation of this motif, her focus lies elsewhere.[24] The purpose of her study is to develop a typology of an artistic theme during the third millennium and to document all its stylistic variations.

It is important to underline the difference between *banquets* and *feasts* in this context. Art historians have traditionally described Mesopotamian imagery of feasting individuals as banquet scenes, which signifies a motif and therefore deals with issues of iconography. This terminology has influenced conceptions of their meaning within their ancient setting. A banquet implies a commensal gathering of invited individuals to celebrate or commemorate an event or a person, often in a ceremonial setting. Although this term might appear to describe the iconography quite well, it constrains the range of possible interpretations. The term *feast*, on the other hand, following J. Gero, refers to a human practice in which any number of people gather in commensal activities that transcend everyday behavior.[25] By employing the concept of the *feast* as opposed to more-restrictive terms such as *banquet*, I intend to avoid projecting cultural

22. Ibid., 1–13.

23. Ibid., 1; likewise, see Frances Pinnock, "Considerations on the 'Banquet Theme' in the Figurative Art of Mesopotamia and Syria," in *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East* (ed. L. Milano; Padua: Sargon, 1994) 15–26; and Karol Zajdowski, "Transformation of the Mesopotamian Banquet Scene into the Presentation Scene in the Early Dynastic, Akkadian and Ur III Periods," *Akkadica* 134 (2013) 1–16.

24. Selz, *Die Bankettszene*, 1–13, 436–87.

25. Joan M. Gero, "Feasting and the Practice of Stately Manners," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 285–88; for a similar definition, see Dietler and Hayden, "Digesting the Feast," 3.

connotations onto the imagery.[26] Mesopotamian iconography from the third millennium depicts a wide range of scenes in which individuals gather in a ritual or festive setting for the consumption of food and liquids. According to Gero's definition, all of these images can be described with the neutral term *feasts* without implying that they refer to the same activities and contexts but, instead, indicating that feasting was part of a wide variety of events.

B. Diachronic and Generalizing Approaches

The focus on iconography and motifs was accompanied by a reductive tendency to trace general trends through time, thereby neglecting both synchronous variation and pervasive changes in behavior and sociopolitical organization. Stylistic variations on the motif were understood as superficial changes to an unchanging underlying reality. As such, variations on the "banquet theme" were seen as the result of different workshops and changing stylistic and esthetic preferences. An approach of this sort assumes that the message of the image remains unchanged, despite changes in appearance. Even when the motif disappears, other scenes can be interpreted to refer implicitly to the original message. For example, the cup and the seated deity in the presentation scenes during the end of the third millennium B.C.E. are sometimes understood to evoke the explicit commensality and seating arrangements of earlier banquet scenes.[27]

Although these sorts of diachronic and cross-regional studies of stylistic variation are useful for typological purposes, they neglect the constantly changing dynamics of ancient societies. By treating feasting imagery as an artistic motif, researchers have emphasized the tracing of stylistic changes instead of social, economic, or political developments.[28] The banquet scene motif as a whole has often been interpreted to represent deceased individuals dining in the afterlife,

26. From here on, I use the term *banquet scene* to refer to the artistic motif, while using the term *feasts* to describe the actual events and practices.

27. Pinnock, "Considerations on the 'Banquet Theme' "; Zajdowski, "Transformation of the Mesopotamian Banquet Scene."

28. The banquet motif has been viewed as a cultural expression of Mesopotamian societies that lasted from the Uruk period in the fourth millennium B.C.E. to the end of the first millennium B.C.E.—for example, Collon, "Banquets in the Art of the Ancient Near East"; Pinnock, "Considerations on the 'Banquet Theme' "; Selz, "Die Bankettszene"; Zajdowski, "Transformation of the Mesopotamian Banquet Scene"; Anton Moortgat, *Bildwerk und Volkstum Vorderasiens zur Hethiterzeit* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1934); idem, *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Steinschneidekunst* (Berlin: Mann, 1940).

to depict rituals during the New Year's Festival (specifically, the Sacred Marriage rite in which the king and a high priestess joined in sexual union, acting as the deities Dumuzi/Tammuz and Inanna in order to ensure the continuity of fertility), or to represent celebrations of military victories or harvests.[29] Even when it is recognized that feasts occurred during a variety of events, scholars search for a general framework in which to understand all images of festivities. Both Amiet and Pinnock have appreciated the wide variety of banquet scenes, and both have argued convincingly that no one activity can be represented by all of these images.[30] Nevertheless, they have taken all images as a whole to represent feasts generically:

> [L]a cérémonie du banquet a dû être célébrée en de multiples circonstances, par des particuliers, par diverses collectivités et enfin par des rois, à l'occasion de leurs victoires et probablement aussi lors de fêtes liturgiques au nombre desquelles celle du Nouvel-An a fort bien pu être comptée.[31]

These approaches reduce the complexity of historical manifestations to a level of generic imagery. However, the existence of feasting imagery shows that feasting practices played particularly important roles during various periods of Mesopotamian history, while the imagery that depicted these events served a specific purpose that can and should be reconstructed. At the same time, iconographic evolution and diachronic changes in the popularity of depicting feasts probably reflect underlying changes in society, not merely developments of style or fluctuating fashions.[32]

C. Interpretations of the Role of Feasting in Ancient Mesopotamia

In 2001, Schmandt-Besserat proposed the first coherent model for the reconstruction of the social and economic context of banquet

29. For interpretation as the afterlife: Georges Contenau, *La Glyptique Syro-Hittite* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 2; Paris: Geuthner, 1922); Otto Weber, *Altorientalische Siegelbilder* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1920); for New Year's and sacred marriage: Henri Frankfort, "Gods and Myths on Sargonid Seals," *Iraq* 1 (1934) 2–29; Moortgat, "Bildwerk und Volkstum"; idem, *Tammuz: Der Unsterblichkeitsglaube in der altorientalischen Bildkunst* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1949); for victory and harvest: Collon, "Banquets in the Art of the Ancient Near East."

30. Pinnock, "Considerations on the 'Banquet Theme'"; Pierre Amiet, *La Glyptique Mésopotamienne Archaïque* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1961).

31. Ibid., 130.

32. Contrary to Zajdowski, "Transformation of the Mesopotamian Banquet Scene."

scenes.[33] In an attempt to integrate concepts of feasting studies with economic models that assume a redistributive economy in ancient Sumerian city-states, she suggests that Early Dynastic banquet scenes were emblematic depictions of large-scale, all-inclusive feasts. In this model, every member of society would hand over his monthly surplus to the gods during regular religious festivals, with the queen as the intermediary collector and dedicator and the king as the actual recipient. The incentive for this sacrifice would have been a strongly ingrained religious ideology and social peer pressure regarding gift-giving. Thus, monthly religious festivals served as tax-collection times in order to supply the royal family with the wealth necessary to finance its projects and maintain its status. In other words, Schmandt-Besserat's model understands the banquet scenes as representations of massive popular gatherings that served a crucial role in the Sumerian economic system. However, there is no textual evidence for the monthly collection of household surpluses as taxes. On the contrary, the Early Dynastic cuneiform records suggest that agricultural production was under the control of large landowners, both private and institutional. The majority of the population was tied to one of these large landowners in a system of servitude; in return for daily labor, people were issued rations in the form of agricultural produce.[34]

Based on a scholarly understanding of this exploitative economic system from cuneiform records, Pollock proposes that banquets were the prerogative of a small ruling class.[35] While she acknowledges the existence of large-scale popular feasts, she considers these to be very different from the feasts that are depicted in the visual arts and described in both literary and administrative sources. Special dishes and beverages would only be displayed and consumed during confined, small-scale, elite banquets.[36] The banquet scenes, then, are depictions of feasts with a small number of elite participants engaging in conspicuous consumption of rare delicacies. These feasts and their depictions in Sumerian art were an expression of the position

33. Schmandt-Besserat, "Feasting in the Ancient Near East."

34. The situation was of course more complicated than this: for a full discussion, see Susan Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia: The Eden That Never Was* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and J. Nicholas Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London: Routledge, 1992).

35. Pollock, "Feast, Funerals, and Fast Food."

36. Ibid., 21–27.

of power enjoyed by the elites who had established and maintained a monopoly over the production and consumption of comestibles.

Both models treat feasting as a somewhat static mode of behavior. In their respective articles on Mesopotamian feasting, Schmandt-Besserat and Pollock present ancient Mesopotamia as a society strictly divided between a very small group of all-controlling elites and a large, exploited populace. In their models, feasting is merely an expression of this strict, binary socioeconomic organization, either as an instrument to extract resources from the general population or as a display and consolidation of the elite's monopoly of power. Neither takes into account the significant variety of banquet-scene images, the long time span during which this imagery was produced (ca. 1,000 years), the full range of social positions and divisions of power, or the extensive political developments that occurred during this period. In the words of Dietler and Hayden: "[Feasts] were not simply epiphenomenal reflections of changes in culture and society, but central arenas of social action that have had a profound impact on the course of historical transformations."[37]

While both Schmandt-Besserat and Pollock explore the role of feasts in the socioeconomic context of ancient Sumerian societies, further investigation can reconstruct how feasts themselves were manipulated and deployed by individuals and groups to induce social and political changes. At the same time, the imagery of feasting and the objects carrying these images were part of the material culture that helped shape Sumerian culture and that was open to manipulation to confirm or alter the status quo. A study of Mesopotamian feasting practices then means treating works of art as material objects that played an important role in the formation and continuation of ancient society.[38]

Benz and Wächtler provide one attempt of this sort to situate the evidence for feasting within the historical and political development of ancient Sumer during the third millennium B.C.E.[39] They suggest that feasts evolved from reciprocal to diacritical practices in

37. Dietler and Hayden, "Digesting the Feast," 16.

38. The study of materiality and its role in human societies has been an important field of inquiry during the past two decades; see, for example, Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Daniel Miller, *Materiality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

39. Benz and Wächtler, "Von der Integration zur Distinktion."

which the ruler increasingly distanced himself from the rest of society.[40] The culmination of this development at the end of the Early Dynastic period was a visual program deploying an iconography of intimate scenes between the king and a god (completely detached from the social and political context in which the ruler must have operated), with the king acting as an exclusive intermediary between two distinct worlds.

However, Benz and Wächtler do not seem to think that feasting practices themselves changed significantly but, instead, that only the hierarchical setting and conception of kingship underwent pronounced developments. The imagery reflects how the ruling family understood feasting and the aspects that they intended to emphasize. While at first elites used feasts to maintain general loyalty through an emphasis on communality and the redistribution of food (integration phase), they gradually began to use the regularly recurring ritual feasts as a stage to display their prominent position (distinction phase). Ultimately, the emphasis changed completely to the role of the king during these events, when he made sacrifices and libations to the gods, with whom he interacted on behalf of his people.

However, Benz and Wächtler do not include much additional evidence to gain insights into the actual practices of Mesopotamian feasting. As Dietler has argued: "It is not enough to demonstrate that states used feasting as part of their political strategies. It is crucial to ask what kinds of feasting were being utilized and how they functioned politically in order to really advance understanding of political practices and processes."[41] In all three models, "feasting" is still

40. Benz and Wächtler emphasize a shift from the use of feasts to integrate society to using them as a platform to establish and perform distinctions in prestige, wealth, and power. By reciprocal feasts, they mean feasting activities in which everyone contributes the same amount and receives the same value in return. These events are not about displays of wealth but, rather, serve to forge social coherence among all levels of society. Such events can alleviate tensions resulting from differentiated access to wealth and prestige by creating a false perception of equality. In contrast, diacritical feasts serve to demonstrate social hierarchy by explicitly displaying wealth and prestige. Such events are marked by restrictions in access and participation for large groups of society. By suggesting a development from reciprocal to diacritical feasts, Benz and Wächtler suggest that there was a major shift in ideology and social structure that found its expression in feasting events.

41. Dietler, "Clearing the Table," 275; see also Tamara L. Bray, "The Commensal Politics of Early States and Empires," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 1–13.

employed as a general concept describing a large group of people gathering in commensal activities, underlying the general category of banquet scenes in Sumerian art. In other words, although Benz and Wächtler emphasize the dynamics of historical and political developments during the third millennium B.C.E., they still maintain a static model of feasting practices.

By connecting two sources of evidence—textual records and imagery—and by focusing on a specific subset of the so-called banquet scenes, I suggest instead that, during the Early Dynastic III period, the feasts depicted in the imagery were neither all-inclusive popular events nor small-scale elite gatherings.[42] The archive of the É.MUNUS contains a set of records of goods that were "sacrificed" and therefore most likely consumed during the monthly religious festivals.[43] Based on the amounts of beer mentioned in these records, the probable number of participants of these events ranged from at least 500 to as many as 2,000 people. This range of people suggests a scene of a vibrant political continuum from low-ranking administrators to members of the ruling family who were invited to the feasts. The feasting iconography from the Early Dynastic III period can be related to the festivities documented in the É.MUNUS archive. They depict lavish feasts for the members of the administrative and political class of Sumerian society, which consisted of families who served in large institutional organizations—that is, in temple households.

The reason for the popularity of feast representations during the Early Dynastic III period was their function and message. At a time when powerful individuals and their families were seeking ways to concentrate and monopolize their power by manipulating the existing political-religious structures of their societies, visual arts were increasingly exploited as a means to consolidate their position. The banquet scenes in the glyptic art of this period served as a constant reminder of the lavishness and exclusivity of the ritual feasts. They show a group that was privileged to participate in the power structure of the city-state, while at the same time emphasizing the supreme

42. I have laid out the evidence and arguments more fully elsewhere. See my papers: "The Consumption of Beer in Early Dynastic Lagash" (ASOR Annual Meeting, San Francisco, November 2011); idem, "Feasting and Political Competition in Early Dynastic Mesopotamia" (Edith Porada Centennial Symposium, Columbia University, 2012); idem, "The Role of Feasting Practices in Early Dynastic Mesopotamia" (ASOR Annual Meeting, Baltimore, November 2013).

43. Beld, *The Queen of Lagash*.

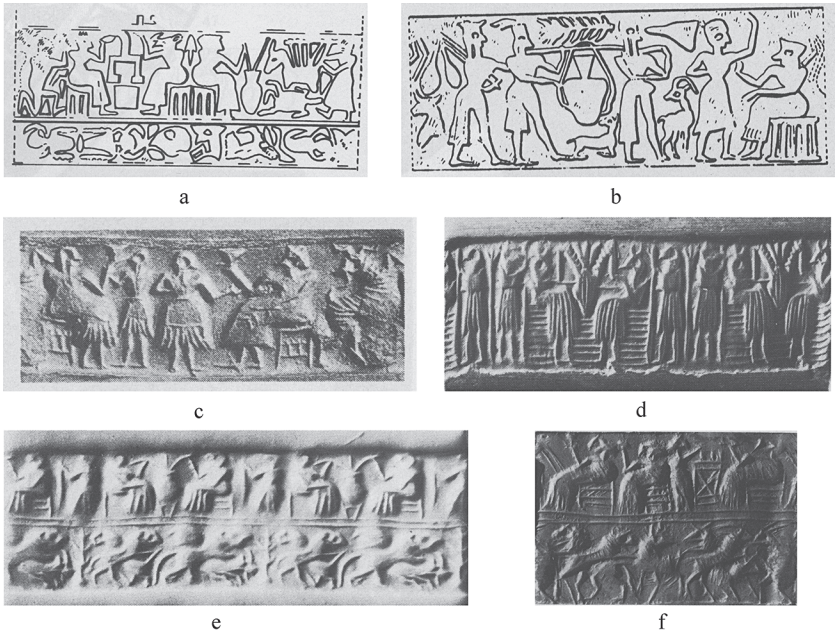

Fig. 2. Variety of third-millennium B.C.E. Mesopotamian banquet scenes (after Selz, *Die Bankettszene*, ED I: [a] fig. 1:37; [b] fig. 3:48; ED II: [c] fig. 8:92; [d] fig. 10:119; ED IIIA: [e] fig. 22:271; [f] fig. 23:281).

position of the royal family as *primus inter pares*. The images show idealized and expected behavior within a coherent, loyal community at a time when powerful individuals were attempting to change the status quo in their favor. When kingship and its close ties to the divine world became fully institutionalized, unquestionable, and hereditary during the final decades of the Early Dynastic III period, these banquet scenes changed and ultimately disappeared. In their place came imagery of a banqueting royal couple or a ruler and a deity, which clearly transmitted a different message in the new constellation of power.

3. Sumerian Banquet Scenes: Feasting Practices and Political Strategies

In the remainder of this essay, I will focus on the differences in these images from the third millennium B.C.E. that have been collectively referred to as banquet scenes. Apart from differences in the scenes from different periods, one can also see differences in

the banquet scenes on different media. These distinctions are highly meaningful and offer a glimpse into various feasting practices and various strategies to manipulate the existing power structure.

A. Cylinder Seals

My study of ancient Mesopotamian feasting practices focuses exclusively on a small subset of glyptic images limited to the Early Dynastic III period. This group represents the archetypal Sumerian banquet scene in current scholarship, but it stands out in comparison with other scenes in the same art-historical category. The canonical Early Dynastic III banquet scenes depict large-scale feasts with many individuals and lack any indication of location (such as architectural features) or elements that distinguish individuals socially or hierarchically (such as dress or attributes; see fig. 1). What were the reasons behind the large variety of depictions within the supposedly coherent category of "banquet scenes," and why did the archetypal subgroup become so prevalent during a relatively short period, only to disappear almost completely?

During the Early Dynastic I–II period (ca. 2900–2500 B.C.E.), among the many varied glyptic images, there are images that foreshadow familiar scenes: seated individuals on square seats drinking either through tubes from a common vessel or from cups (fig. 2a–b).[44] As is common in glyptic imagery from this period, this scene is often accompanied with "filling motifs" (vegetables, animals, or symbols). Already toward the end of Early Dynastic I, there were depictions of people carrying goods, which then appeared on the votive plaques that became popular during the Early Dynastic II period.[45] At the same time, a few banquet scenes depicted participating deities (fig. 2d).[46] A glance at the seal impressions from this period reveals the variety in style, technique, combination of motifs, number of individuals, drinking implements, and dress (fig. 2c–d).[47]

In contrast, banquet scenes of the Early Dynastic III period (ca. 2500–2250 B.C.E.) became highly canonized in content and style, with few notable exceptions.[48] My study focuses especially on the subgroup from the Royal Tombs of Ur, which are even more homogeneous in style and imagery than the banquet scenes from this period

44. Selz, *Die Bankettszene*, figs. 9–37.
45. Ibid., fig. 48.
46. Ibid., fig. 119.
47. Ibid., figs. 41–195.
48. Ibid., figs. 288–302, 305–14.

as a whole. Nevertheless, most banquet scenes from this period attempt to represent on a small medium a large crowd of people (with varying degrees of success), most of whom are undifferentiated in depiction, attribute, or dress, with only a couple of individuals seated and consuming alcoholic beverages. The images that deviate from this scheme or combine it with other imagery stand out in contrast (compare fig. 2e–f with fig. 1).[49]

Deviations of this sort can be explained in several ways. These images may depict different feasting events, clues of which could be found in the imagery associated with the banquet scenes or in the smaller scale and higher ratio of seated individuals. Another explanation is that the combination of two sets of imagery on one seal did not allow enough space for the seal-cutter to depict the feast as usual, forcing him to carve an abbreviated version of it. In these cases, it may be that the need to have two sets of imagery on one seal took precedence over any other concerns. A final possibility is that some of these seals were already making a transition toward a larger emphasis on seated individuals, possibly the ruling family. While still evoking festivities in which every member of the privileged group participated, especially when the canonical banquet scenes had become well known and often visible, the artist omitted a large number of the participants and shifted in focus to the most important members, which made a bold statement about ambitious individuals who were pushing the limits of conventions.

The imagery from the end of the Early Dynastic III period varies considerably. In the relatively short time span of a few decades, many variations appeared in compositions that employ scenes of drinking and feasting individuals. This was also a punctuated period of canonization at the beginning of political turmoil. In images from this time, there were generally fewer individuals or at least there was less emphasis on large groups of people, and the focus shifted to drinking and to seated men and women. Furthermore, one sees more representations of deities and depictions of architectural elements in these scenes.[50] There are even scenes depicted without any attendants.[51]

This immense variety raises serious challenges to the quest for a deeper understanding of the banquet scene as a general category,

49. Ibid., fig. 335, which combines a small banquet scene with a chariot scene well known from votive plaques.

50. For deities: ibid., figs. 380, 382; for architectural elements: figs. 357–65.

51. Ibid., figs. 389, 410, and 412.

though there are certainly common traits and elements that recur in images of this category throughout the entire Early Dynastic period. There are two approaches to these challenges. One approach is to conjecture that all these images represented the same underlying concept but mostly in abbreviated form, so that a visual element referred to a concept that would be instantly recognizable to the contemporary viewer. The other is to understand the recurring elements as representing certain activities that can take place in a variety of social, political, or religious contexts, so that the specific mode of representation of the entire image and the combination of different elements is intended to evoke a particular setting and to send out a clearly prescribed message.

I argue for the latter option. All banquet scenes refer to feasting practices but on varying scales and in different settings. What matters is not the act of drinking and feasting but the event or setting that is being evoked and the message that is being transmitted. Focusing on a specific subgroup with comparable iconography provides insights into actual practices and their role in the sociopolitical context of the individual Sumerian city-state. My application of this method to the cylinder seals with banquet scenes from the Royal Cemetery of Ur makes it possible to derive information from this coherent set of images on rules of behavior and the way the ruling family manipulated these events to communicate their prime position among the elites of the state. As can be seen in figs. 1–2, all individuals in these images are rendered in the same way, wear the same outfit (except differentiated between males and females), and lack attributes that would signify social position. At the same time, in this setting of equality in dress and appearance, only a few individuals are seated and drinking. This suggests a formalized social setting of a community of elites in which a small group, perhaps one family, asserts its subtle superiority and primary position in the social hierarchy.

The iconographic and stylistic changes of banquet scenes in glyptic art are not merely the result of fashion. Instead, they reveal pervasive developments of the political constellation and religious-political ideology of Sumerian city-states. Furthermore, not every banquet scene depicts a highly ritualized or even esoteric context of interactions with deceased members of society (funerary) or the divine (sacred marriage). Even though the feasts depicted on seals from the Early Dynastic III period took place during regularly recurring religious festivals, they probably fulfilled a more mundane function as well—bringing together members of a large elite community

Fig. 3. Votive plaque from Khafajah (courtesy of the Oriental Institute, Chicago).

who otherwise lived dispersed throughout the territory of the state and occupied various functions in different institutions. During these feasts, social ties were forged and careers were built. The ruling family (or families) increasingly took control of these events to establish and maintain loyalty and control among rivals and peers.

B. Votive Plaques

Around the middle of the third millennium B.C.E. and throughout the Early Dynastic III period, banquet scenes were also an important artistic motif on perforated plaques found in temples (fig. 3).[52]

52. For discussions on chronology and function, see Johannes Boese, *Altmesopotamische Weihplatten: Eine sumerische Denkmalsgattung des 3. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971); Susanne M. Pelzel, *Perforated Sumerian Votive*

Many of these come from the Diyala region, but examples and fragments are known from almost every site in southern Mesopotamia. While banquet scenes were the predominant theme depicted on these plaques, the correlation is not strong enough to connect these plaques as a group to the general context of feasts. Several contemporary plaques contain unrelated imagery, and in the latter half of the Early Dynastic III period, libation scenes became more prominent. Like the banquet scenes, however, these votive plaques became less popular after the Early Dynastic period and were no longer produced by the end of the third millennium B.C.E.

This development had more to do with pervasive changes in access to and control over the production of temple furnishings than with a connection to banquet scenes. Some of the votive plaques contain inscriptions naming their dedicator, who were often wealthy individuals and only occasionally rulers. In other words, these plaques suggest strategies to gain influence by a range of powerful individuals participating in the political and religious scene of Sumerian city-states, both by displaying wealth and importance and by communication with the divine world. This observation fits well with current understandings of ancient feasting behavior in complex societies: "[E]ven in highly centralized states, the central authorities would not have been the only individuals or groups mounting feasts—virtually all households and social groups would do so, but according to rather different logics and with different scales and effects."[53]

However, while many different individuals and groups organized feasts, only a few had the means and access to display these events in visual arts. By the end of the Early Dynastic period, the king and his immediate entourage established a monopoly over such displays as well as over access to the temple and the divine realm. This access can be understood quite literally in that only the ruler and his entourage or family were able to enter many parts of temple buildings. As a result, not only was the ruler the only one who could order the production of these implements, but there were no longer any political rivals to witness them on their way through the corridors and rooms of these temples. The staff and servants in charge of daily operations of the temple were in service to the deity and the royal family. In the Akkadian and Ur III empires, this development culminated in kings establishing family members and loyal subjects as priests

Plaques (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1973); idem, "Review of *Altmesopotamische Weihplatten* by Johannes Boese," *JAOS* 97 (1977) 67–76.

53. Dietler, "Clearing the Table," 275.

in charge of temple institutions (such as Enheduanna, the daughter of Sargon and also the high priestess of the moon-god Nanna/Suen at Ur).[54] A foreshadowing of this practice can be seen in the É.MUNUS institution, which was headed by the queen of Lagash.

The most commonly known examples of votive plaques depict imagery that closely resembles glyptic banquet scenes during the Early Dynastic III period. The top row usually contains two seated individuals, often a woman and a man, who are being attended and served drinks by others. The middle register sometimes depicts people carrying baskets and vessels, much like scenes known on the cylinder seals. The bottom register often contains animals and sometimes chariot scenes, which are not usually found on cylinder seals. When focusing on the registers with banqueting couples and people bringing goods for the feast, the researcher logically thinks of interpreting these plaques in the same way as s/he would interpret cylinder seals. However, there are two good reasons to avoid these sorts of generalization.

First of all, imagery such as chariots should not merely be dismissed when one is interpreting the setting of the scenes that are represented. Moreover, this imagery, which is almost completely absent from banquet scenes on cylinder seals, should not be used to reconstruct one ritual setting to fit all the various scenes. Second, even banquet scenes on votive plaques are often quite different from the two-register banquet scenes on cylinder seals that are known best from the Royal Tombs of Ur. In the votive plaques, there is a much more pronounced tendency to differentiate the seated individuals from the attendants by size, dress, and attributes (for example, compare figs. 1 and 3), which may not indicate social status as much as they do the role of these two individuals in the specific ritual setting that is being evoked (for example, a funerary or dedicatory setting). The votive plaques are clearly not intended to depict general banquets. Instead, they serve as a communication between the dedicator and the divine.

Some of the banquet scenes depicted on votive plaques, more commonly found in southern Sumerian cities such as Girsu, Ur, Uruk, and Nippur, depict seated deities (recognizable by their

54. Betty De Shong Meador, *Princess, Priestess, Poet: The Sumerian Temple Hymns of Enheduanna* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009); Joan G. Westenholz, "Enheduanna: En-Priestess, Hen of Nanna, Spouse of Nanna," in *Dumu-e2-dub-ba-a: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg* (ed. H. Behrens, D. Loding, and M. T. Roth; Philadelphia: Babylonian Section of the University Museum, 1989) 539–56.

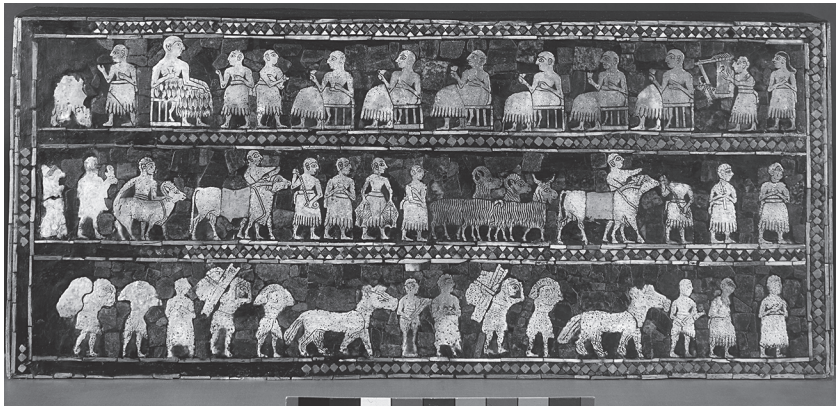

Fig. 4. "Peace panel" of the Standard of Ur (reproduced by courtesy of the British Museum).

horned crowns) and naked worshipers.[55] Other examples depict the ruler explicitly, such as on the Urnanshe plaque from ancient Girsu.[56] Imagery of this sort on votive plaques demonstrates that these plaques did fulfill similar functions as cylinder seals and therefore that banqueting imagery on the two media should not necessarily be equated. These were votive dedications and therefore are much more likely to be connected to specific events in the dedicator's life, funerary settings, or the (re)constructions of part of the temple. The banquet scene as an artistic motif evokes the feast that was an important part of many ritual and social settings, while other imagery serves to place this feast in its associated context. The cylinder seals that contain imagery similar to the votive plaques may evoke similar real-life settings.[57] These plaques then differ substantially in content and function from the canonical banquet scenes found on the Early Dynastic III cylinder seals, best known from the Royal Cemetery of Ur.

C. Standard of Ur

Apart from cylinder seals and votive plaques, there is one more unique piece containing a banquet scene: the so-called Standard of Ur found by Leonard Woolley in a large royal tomb dating to the

55. See for example Pelzel, "Perforated Sumerian Votive Plaques," pl. 49.
56. Aruz, *Art of the First Cities*, fig. 16.
57. Selz, *Die Bankettszene*, fig. 335.

middle of the Early Dynastic III period (ca. 2400 B.C.E.; see fig. 4).[58] The object is a rectangular box decorated on all four sides. Each of the two long sides contains a three-register image. One side, the "war panel," shows soldiers, fallen enemies, captives and booty, and the victorious king overseeing these activities. The other side, the "peace panel," shows deliveries of animals and goods leading up to a banquet scene. While it is unclear whether this piece of art commemorates victory in a specific battle or is a generic representation of the victorious monarch, the imagery is remarkably legible as a celebration of the spoils of war.[59]

At first glance, the banquet scene is similar to iconography known from cylinder seals and votive plaques. There are several seated individuals holding cups, with a few attendants surrounding the king. Behind them are a harpist and a singer, reminiscent of musical scenes on other media. However, several aspects of this particular banquet scene make it very different from contemporary glyptic imagery. Most strikingly, the ruler is clearly recognizable because, not only is he depicted slightly larger than the other figures; he literally breaches the frame of the image. He is further differentiated by his dress because he is the only figure wearing a kaunakes, while the other participants wear skirts with a flounced hem.

Other figures are differentiated as well. The singer has long black hair instead of a bald scalp. Both the musicians and the two attendants in front of the king appear smaller in comparison with the other seated figures. In the two lower registers, figures are differentiated by their clothes: some wear the skirt with flounced hem; others wear a shorter, plain skirt; still others wear a split skirt. Interestingly, only the figures with plain and split skirts are lifting heavy items, and they appear to be led forward by the figures wearing skirts with a flounced hem. This suggests that the skirt with a flounced hem is not worn by mere servants but by citizens who participate in the festivities—whether in an attending role or as a full participant.

58. C. Leonard Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery: A Report on the Predynastic and Sargonid Graves Excavated between 1926 and 1931* (Ur Excavations 2; London: British Museum, 1934) 266–74.

59. Donald P. Hansen, "Art of the Royal Tombs of Ur: A Brief Interpretation," in *Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur* (ed. R. L. Zettler and L. Horne; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1998) 45–47; Julian Reade, "The Royal Tombs of Ur," in *Art of the First Cities* (ed. J. Aruz; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art / New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003) 97–100.

A third difference from banquet scenes on cylinder seals can be seen in the number of seated individuals and their arrangement. In glyptic imagery, seated participants are often arranged in pairs and surrounded by attendants. The participants and attendants are often a mixture of males and females. The Standard of Ur portrays a very different setting. All participants are male, and all are facing the king, who is the only one with attendants around him. The only parallel for this scene can be found on the roughly contemporary Urnanshe plaque, where the king appears with his sons (and possibly one daughter) in a similar seating arrangement. The seated individuals on the Standard of Ur, then, must also be members of the king's immediate entourage, if not his sons.

This work of art is an early attempt at individualization in a time when most art depicted generic scenes and emblematic imagery. Whether this work represented a specific historical event or showed the ruler as a victorious military leader throughout his life is irrelevant for the argument here. More important is the fact that this ruler is breaking from the accepted norms in order to display his power and importance in a manner that is completely unknown in glyptic art at this time. Of course, in the context of the Royal Cemetery of Ur, with the large-scale sacrifice of human beings and material wealth to accompany the funerary rites of the deceased member of the royal family, the minor attempts at aggrandizement on the Standard of Ur seem trivial. Nevertheless, it is a first step toward major changes in iconography and an important development in the employment of visual arts as a way to establish and maintain power within Sumerian society. It should be noted, however, that the Standard of Ur probably did not circulate among the elites and rivals for power in the city-state as seals and seal impressions did. This unique, valuable artifact was probably either a personal item displayed and used in a more private setting or was produced specifically for the funeral, when aggrandizement was the goal. After all, paying homage to a deceased ruler poses less challenge to the existing balance of power than a living contender does.

4. Toward an Appreciation of Diversity

In this essay, I have argued that ancient Mesopotamian art and ritual practices were much more diverse than current art-historical categories suggest. Feasting and conspicuous consumption were a part of many different social settings and took place in a wide variety of events. Images depicting feasts reflect this diversity. Instead of

concentrating on general categories and artistic themes, researchers should turn their focus to actual feasting practices. Ritualized commensality and conspicuous consumption were aspects of social and political behavior that were manipulated by elites in Sumerian society in order to increase their positions of power. These strategies resulted in a pervasive overhaul of the existing order and led to political and historical changes that would alter the Mesopotamian landscape. The feasting practices and their depictions during this period allow us to reconstruct a history of the development of institutionalized and centralized kingship.

In addition to these diachronic changes, attention to actual feasting practices and settings allows us to appreciate synchronous diversity among polities and regions and within communities. It is the contrast of differences—moving beyond the formation of generalizing categories—that allows for a deeper understanding of ancient societies through their material culture. The differences between the feasting imagery on temple votive plaques, on the one hand, and on cylinder seals, on the other hand, suggest that these images depict different events and serve very different purposes. The organization of feasts does not appear to have been the sole privilege of the ruler during the Early Dynastic period. Feasting was an important part of Sumerian society and often functioned as a stage to display one's power and wealth as well as a means to influence rivals and peers. In a society relying on face-to-face interaction, feasts served to bring together a dispersed elite community to foster social ties and engage in the politics of the city-state.

The Next Level and the Final Stage

Consistency and Change in the Provision of Meals for the Dead in Their Different Stages of Existence and the Accompanying Feasting Acts of the Living, as Evidenced at Mari, Qaṭna, and Ugarit

Sarah Lange

Food offerings are well known as provisions for the dead in the netherworld. They are supposed to comfort spirits in the afterlife so that they do not come back into this world and harm the living.[1]

Author's note: This essay is the revised version of a paper presented at the ASOR Annual Meeting 2013 in Baltimore (the slightly different title was "The Next Level and the Final Stage: Consistency and Change in the Provision of Meals for the Dead in Their Different Stages of Existence, as Evidenced from Mari, Qaṭna, and Ugarit"). I thank Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, Janling Fu, and Jonathan Greer for accepting my paper for the session "The Archaeology of Feasting and Foodways" at the ASOR Meeting, and I also express my gratitude to Peter Altmann and Janling Fu for giving me the opportunity to publish this paper in the present volume.

This essay presents some of the results of my doctoral thesis, *Das Totenmahl in Syrien im 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.: Eine Untersuchung zur Bedeutung, Symbolik und Tradition eines altorientalischen Konzepts in philologischer, archäologischer und religionsgeschichtlicher Perspektive am Beispiel von Mari, Qaṭna und Ugarit*, which was written within the Ph.D. network "Symbols of the Dead" at the University of Tübingen. I thank Prof. Dr. Herbert Niehr and Prof. Dr. Peter Pfälzner for their constant support and valuable criticism during the development of this work.

1. For the relevance of food offerings to the dead in the ancient Near East, see, for instance, Aaron J. Skaist, "The Ancestor Cult and Succession in Mesopotamia," in *Death in Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the XXVIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (ed. B. Alster; Mesopotamia 8; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980) 123–28 (here, pp. 126–27); Jean Bottéro, "La mythologie de la mort en Mésopotamie ancienne," in ibid., 25–52 (here, pp. 38–41); idem, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 281–82; Paolo Xella, "Sur la nourriture des morts: Un aspect de l'eschatologie mésopotamienne," in *Death in Mesopotamia*, 151–60; Akio Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege (*kispum*) im alten Mesopotamien* (AOAT 216; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985) 237–38; Josef Tropper, *Nekromantie: Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament*

However, various kinds of food offerings should be differentiated, meaning that the time and the place of the offerings, the relation of the donor to the recipient, and the reason for the offerings must be considered in order to distinguish the diverse conceptions that lie behind them. To study the various conceptions of food offerings for the dead in second-millennium B.C.E. Syria, I chose the three locations of Qaṭna, Mari, and Ugarit because each has a great deal of material available about this topic. These political entities were also demonstrably interrelated during this period. These relationships were expressed, for instance, in a month-long visit by King Zimri-Līm of Mari (ca. 1775–1760 B.C.E.) to Ugarit[2] and by the marriage of a daughter of King Išḫi-Adad of Qaṭna (ca. 1810–1790 B.C.E.) to King Yasmaḫ-Adad of Mari (1803–1775 B.C.E.).[3] The economic and diplomatic relations between these kingdoms suggest that cultural exchange also occurred, at least to a certain degree. Various similarities in the exercise of cultic rituals can also be expected due to the fact that all three royal dynasties had Amorite roots and thus developed at least to some extent from the same cultural heritage.

In this essay, I discuss the various connotations that food offerings could have and the shifting values they could signify in a given society's identification of the departed. As I show below, these are indi-

(AOAT 223; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989) 55–56; JoAnn Scurlock, "Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Mesopotamian Thought," in *CANE*,1883–93 (here, pp. 1888–92); Cécile Michel, "Les Assyriens et les esprits de leurs morts," in *Old Assyrian Studies in Memory of Paul Garelli* (ed. C. Michel; OAAS 4; Leiden: Nederlands Institut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2008) 181–97 (here, pp. 185–87, 194–96); Steven Lundström, "'Das Leben, das Du suchst, wirst Du nicht finden': Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode und vom Leben mit den Toten in den Kulturen Mesopotamiens im 2. und 1. Jt. v. Chr.," in *Jenseitsvorstellungen im Orient: Kongreßakten der 2. Tagung der RVO (3./4. Juni 2011, Tübingen)* (ed. P. Bukovec and B. Kolkmann-Klamt; RVO 1; Hamburg: Kovač, 2013) 119–59 (here, pp. 122–24).

2. All year-dates in this essay follow the Middle Chronology. With regard to the events mentioned, see Pierre Villard, "Un roi de Mari à Ugarit," *UF* 18 (1986) 387–412; Itamar Singer, "A Political History of Ugarit," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (ed. W. G. E. Watson and N. Wyatt; HO 1/39; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 603–733 (here, pp. 616–19).

3. Horst Klengel, "Qaṭna: Ein historischer Überblick," *MDOG* 132 (2000) 239–52 (here, pp. 244–45); Thomas Richter, "Qaṭna: A. Nach schriftlichen Quellen," *RlA* 11:159–61 (here, p. 160); Dominique Charpin and Nele Ziegler, "Politik und Diplomatie: Die Mari-Korrespondenz," in *Schätze des Alten Syrien: Die Entdeckung des Königreichs Qatna* (ed. Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart; Stuttgart: Theiss, 2009) 64–67 (here, pp. 66–67); Peter Pfälzner, "Das Königtum von Qatna," in ibid., 134–37 (here, p. 137).

cated, for instance, in the archaeological record of the royal tomb of Qaṭna, which shows that the deceased underwent some changes in their form of existence in the netherworld. This is further confirmed by cuneiform inscriptions from Mari and Ugarit, which distinguish several stages of existence for the dead.

The following discussion presents a reconstruction of the processes that occurred after a person died, including examples of various ways to provide the deceased with food offerings. In addition, I will address the question of funerary and mortuary feasting during the rituals that accompanied these processes.

In §1, I present the archaeological record from the royal tomb of Qaṭna, which gives insight into various stages of existence in the afterlife and how they might be traced in the record of the tomb.[4] This assemblage of finds represents the treatment of the mortal remains and the activities of the bereaved with regard to the deceased. Subsequently, a selection of textual sources from Mari and Ugarit will show how the dead were treated *after* their burial. The final section provides a comparative interpretation of these investigations of the archaeological and textual data.

1. The Archaeological Record from the Royal Tomb of Qaṭna

The construction of the royal tomb of Qaṭna and the building of the palace date to the beginning of the eighteenth century B.C.E. With the destruction of the palace during the reign of Šuppiluliuma I, around 1340 B.C.E., the use of the tomb suddenly ended. The destruction, at least partially caused by fire, led to backfilling of the tomb's entrance, the antechamber, and the corridor (see fig. 1). Several indicators such as the long-term use of two royal statues prove that there was continuous use of the tomb for almost 500 years. The inventory of the tomb was then frozen in its last state of use by

4. The royal tomb was excavated by Peter Pfälzner and his team from the University of Tübingen. Preliminary results are published, for instance, in Michel al-Maqdissi et al., "Das königliche Hypogäum von Qaṭna: Bericht über die syrisch-deutsche Ausgrabung im November–Dezember 2002," *MDOG* 135 (2003) 189–218; Peter Pfälzner, "Archaeological Investigations in the Royal Palace of Qatna," in *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital: Settlement and Environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna and in Central-Western Syria. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Udine, 9–11 December 2004* (ed. D. Morandi Bonacossi; SAQ 1; Udine: Forum, 2007) 29–64; idem, ed., *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Königsgruft von Qaṭna* (QS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011).

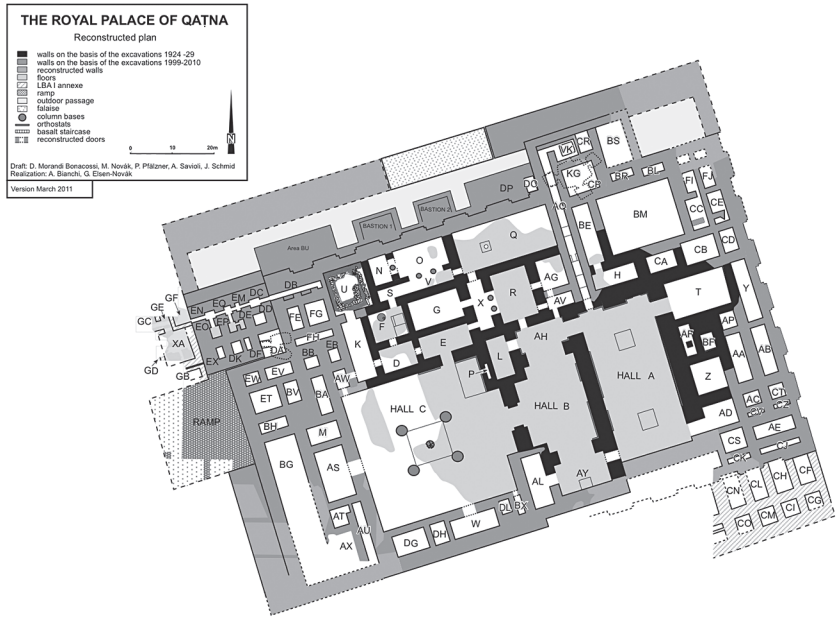

Fig. 1. Plan of the royal palace of Qaṭna with the architectural complex of the royal tomb in the northeast (consisting of corridor AQ, antechamber VK, and royal tomb KG itself; © Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

the sudden destruction of the palace. Thus, Pfälzner points out the inventory's chronologically limited period of use: probably the last decades of the tomb's utilization.[5]

Inside the royal tomb of Qaṭna, certain findings can be related to different burial stages (fig. 2).[6] The thorough excavations of the tomb under the supervision of Heike Dohmann-Pfälzner and the interdisciplinary studies that have been conducted on the material allow a detailed reconstruction of the activities performed inside the tomb.

5. Peter Pfälzner, "Die Chronologie der Königsgruft von Qaṭna," in ibid., 55–67 (here esp. pp. 58–60, 65–66). Note, however, that Pfälzner assumes a length of use of about 400 years (p. 66) since his data is based on the Low Chronology.

6. For a more detailed study of the food offerings for the dead in the royal tomb, see my "Food Offerings in the Royal Tomb of Qaṭna," in *Contextualising Grave Inventories in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of a Workshop at the London 7th ICAANE in April 2010 and an International Symposium in Tübingen in November 2010, Both Organized by the Tübingen Post-Graduate School "Symbols of the Dead"* (ed. P. Pfälzner et al.; QSS 3; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, in press).

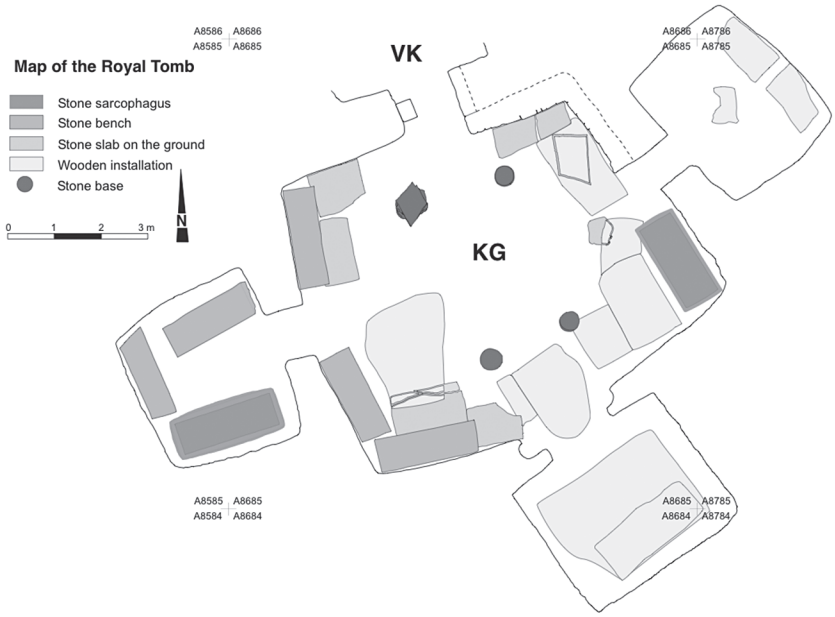

Fig. 2. Map of the royal tomb of Qaṭna (© Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

A. The Laying Out of the Corpse and the Primary Burial

The beginning of the chronological order of the sequence that the dead underwent can, from my understanding of the record, be traced to the southern chamber of the tomb (fig. 3). In this chamber, traces of a wooden structure were detected that had been set up near the southern wall and that are interpreted as a bed.[7] In the vicinity of the wooden remains, some ceramic vessels and articulated animal bones were found. These bones were probably the remains of food deposited in this area.[8] Along the eastern wall, 21 stone vessels had been placed.[9] Six of these vessels, as well as 2 of the

7. Peter Pfälzner, "Die Königsgruft von Qaṭna als architektonisches Ensemble," in *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Königsgruft von Qaṭna* (ed. P. Pfälzner; QS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011) 69–84 (here, p. 84); idem, "Die Goldplaketten und andere prestigehaltige Einzelobjekte aus Gold, Silber und Bernstein aus der Königsgruft von Qaṭna im Kontext von Bestattung und Ritual," in ibid., 137–90 (here, pp. 180–82).

8. Emmanuelle Vila, "Les restes de faune dans le complexe funéraire royal de Qaṭna," in ibid., 383–402 (here, p. 398).

9. In total, 52 stone vessels were counted within the royal tomb (Alexander Ahrens, "Die Steingefäße aus der Königsgruft und dem Palast von Tall Mišrife/

Fig. 3. The southern chamber with traces of a rectangular wooden structure and stone vessels along the eastern wall (photo: Konrad Wita, © Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

ceramic vessels from the southern chamber contained "resin components," as shown by biochemical analyses. It is remarkable that these vessels contained 8 of the overall 11 samples that showed traces of "resin components" from the royal tomb.[10] Surprisingly, no human bones were found in this chamber.[11] While Pfälzner understands this chamber as a banquet room for the royal spirits,[12] I propose, due to the high number of vessels with resin components, that the corpse was laid out in this chamber and embalmed with the substances that

Qaṭna: Verteilung, Typenspektrum und Funktion," in ibid., 259–73 [here, p. 264]).

10. Richard P. Evershed et al., "Organic Residue Analysis of Ceramic and Stone Vessels, Resinous Artefacts and Anthropogenic Sediments from the Royal Tomb," in ibid., 411–47 (here, pp. 417, 420 table 4, 434–35 table 14).

11. Carsten Witzel, "Anthropologische Untersuchungen: Vorläufige Ergebnisse der Untersuchung menschlicher Knochen und Zähne aus der Königsgruft seit der Bergung 2002," in ibid., 367–82 (here, p. 367).

12. Al-Maqdissi et al., "Das königliche Hypogäum von Qaṭna," 206–7; Pfälzner, "Archaeological Investigations," 58.

could be traced in the vessels.[13] During the display of the corpse, the deceased received fresh food offerings, which can be deduced from the articulated animal bones and the related ceramic vessels.

After the rituals in the southern chamber were completed, the corpse was probably transferred to the western chamber; this is where the only primary burial in the royal tomb was detected, on the "burial table," a stone slab set up on two cylindrical stone bases (fig. 4).[14] The traces on top of this stone table show that the corpse was placed in a wooden coffin and was wrapped in several layers of

13. This treatment of the corpse would have been the second embalming process undergone by the dead. This can be deduced from the results that N. Reifarth gained by studying the textile remains on the "burial table" in chamber 4. She proves that the corpse was wrapped, treated with specific substances, and afterward heated for over an hour at a temperature of about 250–300° C (Nicole Reifarth and Rainer Drewello, "Textile Spuren in der Königsgruft: Vorbericht zu ersten Ergebnissen und dem Potential zukünftiger Forschungen," in *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Königsgruft von Qaṭna* [ed. P. Pfälzner; QS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011] 469–82 [here, p. 474]; Nicole Reifarth, "Die Textilien vom Bestattungstisch in Kammer 4. Vorbericht zu den mikrostratigraphischen und textiltechnologischen Untersuchungen," in ibid., 499–523 [here, p. 519]). The heating of the corpse is also confirmed by the anthropological studies (Carsten Witzel and Kerstin Kreutz, "First Results of the Anthropological and Palaeopathological Examination of the Human Skeletal Remains Recovered from the Royal Tomb of Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna," in *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital: Settlement and Environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna and in Central-Western Syria: Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Udine, 9–11 December 2004* [ed. D. Morandi Bonacossi; SAQ 1; Udine: Forum, 2007] 173–87 [here, pp. 177–79]; Witzel, "Anthropologische Untersuchungen," 369–70, fig. 2). Since no traces were found that would allow the reconstruction of heating processes inside the tomb, the wrapping, embalming, and heating must have taken place in another part of or outside the royal palace (Peter Pfälzner, "How Did They Bury the Kings of Qatna?" in *(Re-)Constructing Funerary Rituals in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Tübingen Post-Graduate School "Symbols of the Dead" in May 2009* [ed. P. Pfälzner et al.; QSS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012] 205–20 [here, pp. 209–10]). Subsequently, the corpse was, in my interpretation, brought into the tomb and embalmed once more with resinous substances.

14. Witzel and Kreutz, "First Results of the Anthropological and Palaeopathological Examination," 177; Witzel, "Anthropologische Untersuchungen," 367–68; idem, "Ein Zwischenbericht über die Lagebeziehungen, den Erhaltungszustand und die anthropologischen und paläopathologischen Befunde der menschlichen Überreste vom Bestattungstisch in Kammer 4," in *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Königsgruft von Qaṭna* (ed. P. Pfälzner; QS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011) 527–32 (here, p. 527).

Fig. 4. The "burial table" in the western chamber (photo: Konrad Wita, © Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

textiles.[15] In front of the stone table, some finds of animal bones and fragments of ceramic vessels indicate that fresh food offerings had been placed next to the corpse inside the coffin. They later fell on the ground when the coffin decomposed. In addition, some traces of organic materials on the floor coincide with residues from ceramic bowls in various areas of the tomb.[16] These traces support the interpretation that food offerings were placed in this area. Thus, the deceased received fresh food offerings during the display of the corpse in the southern chamber and at the primary burial.

B. The Secondary Burial

Another stage of existence is signified by the bones of several individuals who were retrieved from two sarcophagi in the royal tomb

15. Pfälzner, "Die Königsgruft von Qaṭna," 82; Heike Dohmann-Pfälzner and Peter Pfälzner, "Archäologischer Kontext und Rekonstruktion des Bestattungstisches in Kammer 4," in ibid., 485–98; Reifarth, "Die Textilien vom Bestattungstisch."

16. Matthew A. James, *Reconstructing Ancient Near Eastern Funerary Practices through Biomolecular, Isotopic and Elemental Analysis of Anthropogenic Sediments from the Royal Tomb at Qatna, Syria* (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 2008) 104.

(figs. 5–6).[17] One sarcophagus stood in the southeastern corner of the main chamber; the other was placed next to the "burial table" on the southern side of the western chamber. Neither of the sarcophagi presented us with complete interments. This and the fact that the human bones were commingled with animal bones indicate that the human bones were deposited in a secondary burial, meaning a reburial of the bones after at least some of the soft tissue had dissolved.[18] In both sarcophagi, Emmanuelle Vila detected articulated animal bones, so the presentation of fresh food offerings can be safely assumed.[19] In addition, both assemblages were accompanied by several ceramic vessels.[20] It is apparent that the status of the deceased was changed in some way due to the secondary burial, and the findings substantiate that this change was accompanied by rituals that again included food offerings.

C. The Tertiary Burial

The final stage of existence that can be traced in the royal tomb is represented by the *ossuary* (fig. 7). This term was applied to the eastern chamber, in which a commingling of the bones of six or seven individuals and disarticulated animal bones was found together with some ceramic bowls.[21] The find situation leads to two conclusions: first of all, it appears that the human and animal bones were brought from another location to the "ossuary," in which the deceased received a tertiary burial, as already proposed by Pfälzner.[22] Second, they were *not* supplied with fresh food offerings this time. The composition and state of the animal bones indicate that the bones of former food offerings were transferred to this chamber and also that the slaughtering waste was deposited next to the other remains.[23]

17. Witzel and Kreutz, "First Results of the Anthropological and Palaeopathological Examination," 176–77; Witzel, "Anthropologische Untersuchungen," 370–74.

18. Ibid., 380.

19. Vila, "Les restes de faune," 391; see also fig. 4, and pp. 398, 401.

20. See Valeria Paoletti, "Die keramischen Funde der Königsgruft von Qatna," in *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Königsgruft von Qaṭna* (ed. P. Pfälzner; QS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011) 293–309 (here, pp. 295, 298).

21. Al-Maqdissi et al., "Das königliche Hypogäum von Qaṭna," 209–10; Pfälzner, "Archaeological Investigations," 59; idem, "Die Königsgruft von Qaṭna," 82–83. For the anthropological data, see Witzel, "Anthropologische Untersuchungen," 378–79.

22. Pfälzner, "How Did They Bury?" 213–15. However, Pfälzner comes to a different conclusion about the food offerings at this stage.

23. Vila, "Les restes de faune," 394.

Figs. 5–6. The two sarcophagi with secondary burials in the western chamber (above) and the main chamber (below) (photo: Konrad Wita, © Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

Fig. 7. The eastern chamber, the "ossuary" (photo: Konrad Wita © Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

This arrangement of finds shows that the commingling of one individual's bones with the bones of other individuals led to the end of the ritual treatment of the individual and resulted in an integration of the individual into a collective.[24] Since it was not possible

24. See also Pfälzner, "How Did They Bury?" 213–15. The transition to an ancestor or the integration of an individual ancestor into an ancestors' collective is assumed to be connected to secondary burials or reburials in ossuaries in various cultures, ancient and modern. See, for instance, Robert Hertz, "A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death," in *Death and the Right Hand* (ed. R. Hertz; London: Cohen & West, 1960) 27–86 (here, pp. 69–70); Nigel Barley, *Grave Matters: Encounters with Death around the World* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2006) 158–59; Priscilla Keswani, *Mortuary Ritual and Society in Bronze Age Cyprus* (London: Equinox, 2004) 13–14; Daniel Hockmann, *Gräber und Grüfte in Assur I: Von der zweiten Hälfte des 3. bis zur Mitte des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (WVDOG 129; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010) 25–26; James F. Osborne, "Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb: Structure and Practice in Iron Age Judah," *JNES* 70 (2011) 35–53 (here esp. pp. 46–47). For a discussion of additional rituals that were necessary to transform a deceased individual into the status of ancestor, see most recently Katharina Teinz, "How to Become an Ancestor: Some Thoughts," in *(Re-)Constructing Funerary Rituals in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of*

Fig. 8. The two ancestor statues in the antechamber with remains of food offerings in front of them (photo: Konrad Wita, © Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

to differentiate between the bones of the individuals anymore, the task of providing the dead with food was probably performed from this point on in front of the statues set up in the antechamber of the royal tomb (fig. 8). These identical statues do not possess any inscriptions, so they cannot be assigned to particular individuals. Their striking resemblance suggests, however, that they represent an infinite plural of deceased kings and therefore stand for a certain collective. Around the western statue, five large flat bowls and an additional fragmented vessel were placed on the ground—two of the bowls directly in front of the statue. One of the latter bowls carefully covered an animal bone.[25] In front of the eastern statue, two bowls were deposited on the ground. These find assemblages in proximity

the Tübingen Post-Graduate School "Symbols of the Dead" in May 2009 (ed. P. Pfälzner et al; QSS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012) 235–43.

25. Pfälzner, "Die Königsgruft von Qaṭna," 75.

Fig. 9. The northwestern area of the main chamber with the extensive finds of ceramic vessels and animal bones (photo: Konrad Wita, © Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

to the statues show that food offerings were made to the statues until the last phase of use of the tomb.[26]

In addition to the evidence of food offerings that can be ascribed to the dead in their various stages of existence, one other assemblage of finds should be mentioned at this point for the sake of completeness. The most extensive finds with regard to food offerings were discovered in the northwestern corner of the main chamber (fig. 9). Here, 83 of about 200 vessels from the royal tomb were placed. These were mostly storage vessels and other closed vessels.[27] Additionally, an extensive assemblage of articulated animal bones was detected in this corner. Vila interprets the arrangement of the animal bones and their articulation to suggest that they were placed down in this area as food offerings and remained more or less in

26. See Mirko Novák and Peter Pfälzner, "Ausgrabungen im bronzezeitlichen Palast von Tall Mishrife–Qaṭna 2002," *MDOG* 135 (2003) 131–65 (here, pp. 145–46, 161–62); Pfälzner, "Die Königsgruft von Qaṭna," 74–76.

27. Paoletti, "Die keramischen Funde," 294.

their original position.[28] If one assumes a similar function for the associated ceramic vessels in this corner, the vessels would have contained foodstuffs that were also intended as offerings. However, since no human bones could be found in this area,[29] it is not possible to ascribe these offerings to any specific corpse, so they cannot be associated with a particular stage of existence.

Summing up the evidence from Qaṭna, the archaeological record from the royal tomb shows that the status of the deceased changed three times. After the display of the corpse, the deceased was buried for the first time and thereby probably integrated into the community of the netherworld. The bones were secondarily transferred (to one of the sarcophagi, for instance) so that the status of the deceased changed, though the individual character was still maintained, and the dead individual was still provided with food offerings directly. In the final stage, the dead lost his status as individual and was integrated into a collective. From this point on, it seems that food was provided for the collective by way of the royal statues; individuals did not receive fresh food offerings anymore. Every change of status was accompanied by food that was offered in various ways. However, there are no cuneiform texts from Qaṭna that provide information about these rituals. Therefore, the question of how these stages of existence are to be understood must be answered by alternative sources.

2. The Various Stages of Existence of the Dead as Evidenced in the Texts from Ugarit

A number of texts from the city of Ugarit document various stages of existence for the dead. In this regard, *KTU* 1:161 is especially important because of its use of various terms for beings in the netherworld. The text describes a ritual that was performed in relation to the funerary ceremony of the second-to-last-known king of Ugarit, Niqmaddu IV (ca. 1225/20–1215 B.C.E.).[30] In the ritual

28. Vila, "Les restes de faune," 385–91.

29. Witzel, "Anthropologische Untersuchungen," 367–69, fig. 1.

30. This king is conventionally known as Niqmaddu III but, according to the latest interpretation, the king in question was Niqmaddu IV (David T. Tsumura, "The Interpretation of the Ugaritic Funerary Text KTU 1.161," in *Official Cult and Popular Religion in the Ancient Near East: Papers of the First Colloquium on the Ancient Near East—The City and Its Life Held at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan (Mitaka, Tokyo); March 20–22, 1992* [ed. E. Matsushima; Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1993] 40–55 [here, pp. 44, 47]; Daniel Arnaud, "Prolégomènes à la

text, several recipients of the offerings are summoned and partially subsumed under certain categories.

Lines 2–12 name individuals to whom an offering is sacrificed and whose ranks the recently deceased King Niqmaddu IV will join. Among the invited guests are the "*rāpiʾūma* of the netherworld," the "assemblage of Didānu," and a group of *rāpiʾūma* that are called by name. However, in the line that follows (line 8), it seems that those who are called by name are summarized as the "ancient *rāpiʾūma*." It should be noted that the "*rāpiʾūma* of the netherworld" and the "assemblage of Didānu" in this text, as in the Ugaritic *Legend of Kirta*,[31] consistently appear in parallel. The term "ancient *rāpiʾūma*," on the contrary, only follows the list of personal names in *KTU* 1:161. Thus, a differentiation is made between the individually named *rāpiʾūma* and a collective of the *rāpiʾūma*. Furthermore, the text lists the two deceased kings, Amiṯtamru II and Niqmaddu III, who bear the title *malku*, "king," instead of *rāpiʾu* and were thus distinguished from the latter. Therefore, this text distinguishes three different stages of the dead in the society of the netherworld: the *malākuma*, the individually named *rāpiʾūma* and a collective of the *rāpiʾūma*.

In lines 19–26, the recently deceased King Niqmaddu is commanded by the sun-goddess Šapšu to "descend into the netherworld" and to lower himself into the dust under the *malakūma* and *rāpiʾūma*. Thus, the text results in the integration of the recently deceased king into the society of the netherworld. However, Levine and de Tarragon question the assumption that the deified king could become a *rāpiʾu*.[32] Their main argument is that the *rāpiʾūma* who are listed by

rédaction d'une histoire d'Ougarit II: Les bordereaux de rois divinizes," *SMEA* 41 (1999) 153–73; Herbert Niehr, "Briefe aus den Archiven von Ugarit: Briefe in ugaritischer Sprache," *TUAT* n.s. 3:264–72 (here, pp. 264–65 n. 55); idem, "Texte aus Ugarit," *TUAT* n.s. 4:243–57 (here, p. 249); and idem, "Die Königsbestattung im Palast von Ugarit: Ein Rekonstruktionsversuch der Übergangsriten aufgrund schriftlicher und archäologischer Daten," in *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt: Theologische, religionsgeschichtliche, archäologische und ikonographische Aspekte* (ed. A. Berlejung and B. Janowski; FAT 64; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 323–46 (here p. 333).

31. *KTU* 1:15 III 3–4 14–15 (for a transliteration and translation, see, for instance, Edward L. Greenstein, "Kirta," in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* [ed. S. B. Parker; SBLWAW 9; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997] 9–48).

32. Baruch A. Levine and Jean-Michel de Tarragon, "Dead Kings and Rephaim: The Patrons of the Ugaritic Dynasty," *JAOS* 104 (1984) 649–59 (here, p. 656). With regard to the *rāpiʾūma*, the so-called *rāpiʾūma*-texts are of great importance as well (see for the latest edition of the texts Dennis Pardee, "Nouvelle étude épigraphique et littéraire des textes fragmentaires en langue ougaritique

KTU 1:161[a]

(1)	*sp̣r . dbḥ . z̲lm*	Tablet of the offering for the statues[b]
(2)	*qritm* ˹. r˺*pi . a*[*rṣ . . .*]	You are invited, *rāpiʾūma* of the nether[world]
(3)	*qbitm . qbṣ . d*[*dn . . .*]	You are summoned, assemblage of Di[dānu]
(4)	*qra . ulkn . r*˹*p*˺[*u . . .*]	Invited is *ulkn*, the *rāpi*[ʾ*u*]
(5)	*qra . trmn . rp*[*u . . .*]	Invited is *trmn*, the *rāpi*[ʾ*u*]
(6)	*qra . sdn . w* ˹. ˺ *rd*[*n . . .*]	Invited is *sdn–w–rd*[*n*]
(7)	*qra . t̲r . ʿllmn*[*. . .*]	Invited is *t̲r–ʿllmn*
(8)	*qru . rpim . qdmym*[*. . .*]	Invited are the ancient *rāpiʾūma*
(9)	*qritm . rpi . arṣ*	You are invited, *rāpiʾūma* of the nether-world
(10)	*qbitm . qbṣ . dd*˹*n*˺	You are called, assemblage of Didā˹nu˺
(11)	*qra . ʿmt̲tm*˹*r* . ˺ *m*˹*l*˺*k*	Invited is Amit̲tam˹ru˺, the k˹in˺g
(12)	*qra . u . nqm*˹*d*˺ [.] ˹*mlk*˺	Invited as well is Niqmaddu, the ˹king˺
[. . .]	[. . .]	[. . .]
(19)	*ʿln . špš . tṣ*˹*ḥ*˺	From above Šapšu cri˹es˺:
(20)	*at̲r* ˹. ˺ [*b*]*ʿlk . l . ks*˹*i*˺	“After your ˹lo˺rds, from the thro˹ne˺,
(20–21)	*at̲r* [(21)]*bʿlk . arṣ . rd .*	after [(21)]your lords descend into the nether-world,
(21–22)	*arṣ* [(22)]*rd . w . špl . ʿpr .*	into the netherworld [(22)]descend and lower yourself into the dust,
(22–23)	*tḥt* [(23)]*sdn . w. rdn .*	under [(23)]*sdn–w–rdn*
(23–24)	*tḥt . t̲r* [(24)]*ʿllmn .*	under *t̲r* [(24)]*ʿllmn*
(24)	*tḥt . rpim . qdm*˹*y*˺*m*	under the ancient *rāpiʾūma*
(25)	*tḥt . ʿmt̲tmr . mlk*	under Amit̲tamru, the king,

a. The transliteration follows Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (SBLWAW 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002) 87–88. The translation is my own.

b. Whether the term *z̲lm* should be translated “shades” or “statues” is controversial: see ibid., 113 n. 123; and Oswald Loretz, “Nekromantie und Totenevokation in Mesopotamien, Ugarit und Israel,” in *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament* (ed. B. Janowski, K. Koch, and G. Wilhelm; OBO 129; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993) 285–318 (here, p. 297) with arguments for the translation “shades.” Wilfred G. E. Watson (“Lexical Notes,” *NUS* 36 [1986] 17–18), Paolo Xella (*I testi rituali di Ugarit* [Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1981] 282–84), and Herbert Niehr (“The Topography of Death in the Royal Palace of Ugarit: Preliminary Thoughts on the Basis of Archaeological and Textual Data,” in *Le royaume d’Ougarit de la Crète à l’Euphrate: Nouveaux axes de recherche; actes du Congrès International de Sherbrooke 2005, Faculté de Théologie, d’Éthique et de Philosophie Université de Sherbrooke, 5–8 juillet 2005* [ed. J.-M. Michaud; POLO 2; Sherbrooke: GGC, 2007] 219–42 [here, p. 251 n. 43]) argue for the translation “statues.” Due to the importance of statues in the realm of the cult of the dead, especially with regard to kings, I follow the understanding of *z̲lm* as “statue” (I presented a different view in “Food and Libation Offerings for the Royal Dead in Ugarit,” *in [Re-]Constructing Funerary Rituals in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Tübingen Post-Graduate School “Symbols of the Dead” in May 2009* [ed. P. Pfälzner et al.; QSS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012] 161–81 [here, pp. 162–64]).

KTU 1:161 (cont.)

(26)	*ṯḥm*[c] . *u* . *nq*[*md*] . *mlk*	under Niq[maddu], the king, as well.
(27)	ʿ*šty* . *w* . *ṯ*ʳʿ⁾[*y* .	(Day) one and a *ṯ*ʿʳ⁾-[sacrifice,
(27)	*ṯn* .] ʳ*w* .⁾ *ṯ*ʿ[*y*]	(day) two] ʳand⁾ a *ṯ*ʿ-[sacrifice],
(28)	*ṯlṯ* . *w*. *ṯ*ʿ*y* [.]	(day) three and a *ṯ*ʿ-sacrifice,
(28)	ʳ*a*⁾[*rb*]ʳʿ⁾ . *w* . *ṯ*ʿ[*y*]	(day) ʳf⁾[our] and a *ṯ*ʿ-[sacrifice],
(29)	*ḫmš* . *w* . *ṯ*ʿ*y* .	(day) five and a *ṯ*ʿ-sacrifice,
(29)	*ṯ*ʳ*ṯ* .⁾ [*w* .] ʳ*ṯ*⁾ʿ*y*	(day) sʳix⁾ [and] a ʳ*ṯ*⁾ʿ-sacrifice,
(30)	*šb*ʿ . *w* . *ṯ*ʿ*y* .	(day) seven and a *ṯ*ʿ-sacrifice.
(30–31)	*tq*ʳ*d*⁾*m*ʿ*ṣr* (31)*šlm* .	You shall sacrʳifʳice a bird (31)(for the) well-being.
(31–32)	*šlm* . ʿ*mr*[*pi*] (32)*w* . *šlm* . *bah.*[d]	Well-being for Ammura[pi] (32)and well-being for his house;
(32–33)	*šlm* . [*ṯ*]*ry*ʾ*l*⁾ (33)*šlm* . *bth* .	well-being for [T]arriyʳelli⁾, (33)well-being for her house;
(33–34)	*šlm* . *u*ʳ*g*⁾*rt* (34)*šlm* . *ṯġrh*	well-being for Uʳg⁾arit, (34)well-being for her gates.

c. To be read *ṯḥt* (Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 115 n. 129).
d. To be read *bth* or *bnh* (ibid., 115 n. 131).

name in *KTU* 1:161 do not appear on the Ugaritic list of kings, but those who do appear on this list, Amiṯtamru II and Niqmaddu III, only bear the title *malku* in *KTU* 1:161.[33] Thus, they argue that there are no indications that a transformation from the existence as *malku* into the existence as *rāpiʾu* occurred.[34] However, a hint about the deceased kings' unification with the *rāpiʾūma* appears in lines 19–26 of *KTU* 1:161. In these lines, Niqmaddu is commanded by Šapšu to lower himself into the dust "under" Kings Amiṯtamru II and Niqmaddu III—here, entitled *malku*—as well as "under" the individually named *rāpiʾūma*.

How this passage is to be understood is complicated by the preposition *ṯḥt* in lines 22–26. The term *ṯḥt* can be translated "under" in the sense of "below," implying hierarchical subordination, or "under," in the sense of "among."[35] Therefore, this passage can be

dits 'Les Rephaïm' (*CTA* 20–22)," *Or* n.s. 80 (2011) 1–65. However, since the *rāpiʾūma*-texts do not directly contribute to the question whether a *malku* could become a *rāpiʾu*, they will not be discussed in this essay.

33. For a transliteration and translation of the Ugaritic kings list (*KTU* 1:113), see, for instance, Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 195–210.

34. Levine and de Tarragon, "Dead Kings and Rephaim," 656.

35. See Gregorio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition* (2nd ed.; HO 67/1, 2; Leiden: Brill,

understood, on the one hand, as the description of a hierarchical subordination, which would not indicate that the king could become a *rāpiʾu*. In this understanding, the king would only subordinate himself to the *rāpiʾūma*. On the other hand, one could render the term *ṯḥt* "among," which would reflect a unification of the king with the *rāpiʾūma*, at least at a later point in time. It is impossible to know which meaning the Ugaritic scribes intended for the term *ṯḥt*, especially since the only appearance of this preposition in a text with a funerary connotation is in the passage under discussion, and we cannot exclude the possibility that they meant to play with the ambiguity of the word. Therefore, this text does not provide us with an explicit answer to the question whether the deceased king could become a *rāpiʾu*.

One other text from Ugarit that provides information on this matter is the *Legend of Kirta* (*KTU* 1:14–1.16).[36] In a passage from this text (*KTU* 1:15 III 2–4 and 13–15), the importance of having an offspring as a condition for the existence of a cult of the dead is emphasized, and the *rāpiʾūma* are mentioned in this regard as well. However, to acknowledge the significance of this epic text to the funerary and mortuary cult, one must posit a certain congruence between the literary and social worlds, as has been suggested by Schloen and Niehr.[37]

In the column preceding lines 2–4, El announces that Kirta will have a large number of children. These lines then read: "May you be

2004) 865–66, s.v. *ṯḥt* (I 1, 3, and 4); the examples listed by the authors show that *ṯḥt* was used when a person was subordinate to another person or, as in the *Legend of Aqhat*, to express that a person was part of a certain community: *yṯb* (. . .) *ṯḥt adrm*, "he sat (. . .) among the nobles, 1.17 V 6 (in ibid.). Levine and de Tarragon conclude regarding *KTU* 1:161 that "the word *ṯḥt* 'below' links the dead kings to the Rephaim" (Levine and de Tarragon, "Dead Kings and Rephaim," 657); they do not indicate, however, whether the king could actually become a *rāpiʾu*.

36. This epic has been discussed extensively by, for instance, Johannes C. de Moor and Klaas Spronk, "Problematic Passages in the Legend of Kirtu (I)," *UF* 14 (1982) 153–71; idem, "Problematic Passages in the Legend of Kirtu (II)," *UF* 14 (1982) 173–90; Baruch Margalit, "K-R-T Studies," *UF* 27 (1995) 215–315; idem, "The Legend of Keret," in *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies* (ed. W. G. E. Watson and N. Wyatt; HO 39/1; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 203–33; Nicolas Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilimilku and His Colleagues* (Biblical Seminar 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 175–243.

37. Niehr, "The Topography of Death," 228; J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (SAHL 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001) 352.

much exalted, O Kirta, in the midst of the *rāpiʾūma* of the netherworld, in the meeting of the assemblage of Didānu."[38] Thus, based on the congruence of the literary and the social world presupposed for Ugarit above, these lines suggest that a king could indeed, at least according to the view of the elite in Ugarit, become a *rāpiʾu*.[39] Additionally, the context of this passage indicates that the existence of successors was closely connected to the guarantee of having a place in the netherworld.[40]

Thus, the Ugaritic texts not only point to different stages of the dead's existence in the netherworld; they indicate that a deceased king was titled *malku* before he became a *rāpiʾu*.[41] It appears that this differentiation was made intentionally, and the people of Ugarit assumed that their dead could achieve different stages in the afterlife. Comparing these terms, I propose that at death a person entered the netherworld as a "simple spirit"; even though a king maintained his status of royalty, his spirit was not immediately exalted by cultic means. Later on, he was dignified—probably by means of rituals—and became a *rāpiʾu*, which I understand as a term for "ancestor." After an undefined period, he merged with the collective of ancestors, the "*rāpiʾūma* of the netherworld."

With regard to food offerings, note that all of the summoned beings from the netherworld were, in my understanding of *KTU* 1:161,

38. *KTU* 1:15 III 2.13 *mid . rm . krt*; 3.14 *btk . rpi . arṣ*; 4.15 *bpḫr . qbṣ . dtn* (transliteration by Greenstein, "Kirta," 25–26).

39. Regarding these lines, see Johannes C. de Moor, "Rāpiʾūma—Rephaim," *ZAW* 88 (1976) 323–45 (here, pp. 323–24; *KTU* 1:161 was not published at the time of de Moor's article; thus, his conclusion regarding the *rāpiʾūma* in this passage is challenged by the new evidence); Levine and de Tarragon, "Dead Kings and Rephaim," 654; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 212 n. 156 (with a different view from the interpretation presented here); Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz, "Mythen und Epen IV," *TUAT* 3:1091–1316 (here, p. 1235 n. 148; on the basis of this passage, Dietrich and Loretz also presume that numerous children resulted in a respected position among the ancestors of the kin). Schmidt presents a completely different understanding of these lines and assumes that the *rpʾi ʾarṣ* and the *qbṣ dtn* represent a "politically influential living warrior nobility" (Brian B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead* [FAT 11; Tübingen: Mohr, 1994; repr. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996] 80–82).

40. This concept is already known, for instance, from the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (tablet XII 152–53; see, for instance, Andrew R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* [vol. 1; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003] 735).

41. For a more extensive argument on this matter, see my "Food and Libation Offerings," 165–67.

provided with *ṯ*ʿ-offerings, which are named in lines 27–30. Since the *malākuma* and the *rāpiʾūma* were summoned on the occasion of Niqmaddu's inclusion into the community of the netherworld and were sent back with him into their midst, the food offerings in the same text were probably offered to them. In these lines, the *ṯ*ʿ-offerings are presented seven times, possibly on seven consecutive days. Since these *ṯ*ʿ-offerings are not defined more precisely in the respective lines, even though a *ṯ*ʿ-offering could consist of several different sacrificial animals (as seen in other Ugaritic texts),[42] one must look for a specification of these offerings within each text. This purpose is served in my opinion by the bird offering mentioned in the subsequent passage, lines 30–31, which read: "You shall sacrifice a bird (for the) well-being." The importance of bird offerings in the context of burial rituals was also pointed out by Bonatz, according to whom these offerings fulfilled the purpose of catharsis for the dead.[43] The occurrence of bird offerings in the context of a cult of the dead is also confirmed by the archaeological record in the royal tomb of Qaṭna, in which several bones of birds were detected.[44]

3. The Various Stages of Existence of the Dead in the Texts from Mari

Mari's 138 administrative *kispu(m)* texts constitute another corpus that manifests various stages of existence of the dead.[45] They document the food expenses for the *kispu(m)*, which Tsukimoto has shown was a crucial element of the "care for the dead."[46] These texts typically mention several items of food—mostly different kinds of bread listed for the "*kispu(m)* of the LUGAL.MEŠ"—and a smaller

42. *KTU* 1:39, 40 (for a transliteration and translation, see for instance Pardee, *Ritual and Cult*, 67–69, 77–83).

43. Dominik Bonatz, *Das syro-hethitische Grabdenkmal: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung einer neuen Bildgattung in der Eisenzeit im nordsyrisch-südostanatolischen Raum* (Mainz: von Zabern, 2000) 94.

44. Vila, "Les restes de faune," 384.

45. See most recently Antoine Jacquet, "LUGAL-MEŠ et *malikum*: Nouvel examen du *kispum* à Mari," in *Recueil d'études à la mémoire d'André Parrot* (ed. D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand; Florilegium marianum 6, Mémoires de NABU 7; Paris: SEPOA, 2002) 51–68; and idem, *Documents relatifs aux dépenses pour le culte* (Florilegium marianum 12, Mémoires de NABU 13; Paris: SEPOA, 2011).

46. Tsukimoto uses the term *Totenpflege* (Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege*, 22).

quantity of other foodstuffs "for the *malikū*."[47] Interestingly, the dates noted on the cuneiform tablets show that the offerings for the LUGAL.MEŠ and for the *malikū* were performed at different intervals. While the *kispu(m)* for the LUGAL.MEŠ was performed at both the new moon and full moon, the offerings for the *malikū* were only performed once a month at the new moon.[48] These data show that the *kispu(m)* for the LUGAL.MEŠ took place more often than the offerings for the *malikū* and consisted of larger quantities of food.

The question about these texts that concerns our discussion here is how to define the LUGAL.MEŠ and the *malikū*. The expression LUGAL.MEŠ indicates, first of all, that several generations of kings were addressed by this ritual. No extant text has come to light that gives more information about the extent of this group of recipients.[49] Nevertheless, some evidence leads to the conclusion that the LUGAL.MEŠ were known by name. First of all, outside Mari, the *kispu(m)* ritual often occurred in close connection with the *nāq mê* ritual, in which a libation was poured, and with the *šumam zakārum* ritual, in which the dead person was called by name.[50] Therefore, the name of the person still needed to be known. In this regard, one remembers the genealogies of the Amorite dynasties that enabled a person to recite the names of deceased family members during a ritual act and thus to invoke every single spirit of a family to participate

47. To get an idea of the quantities of food offerings, see for instance Jacquet, "LUGAL.MEŠ et *malikum*," 65–68.

48. See, for instance, ibid., 53; idem, "Les Rituels de Mari," *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible, Facscicule* 77–78/14 (2008) 388–405 (here, p. 393); idem, "Calendrier et culte à Mari," in ibid., 405–24 (here, p. 412); idem, "Funerary Rites and Cult of the Ancestors during the Amorite Period: The Evidence of the Royal Archives of Mari," in *(Re-)Constructing Funerary Rituals in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Tübingen Post-Graduate School "Symbols of the Dead" in May 2009* (ed. P. Pfälzner et al.; QSS 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012) 123–36 (here, p. 128); compare Maurice Birot, *Textes administratifs de la Salle 5 du palais (2ème Partie): Transcrits, traduits et commentés* (ARMT 12; Paris, 1964) 23; Philippe Talon, "Les offrandes funéraires à Mari," *AIPHOS* 22 (1978) 52–75 (here, p. 57); Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege*, 58.

49. Miranda Bayliss, "The Cult of the Dead Kin in Assyria and Babylonia," *Iraq* 35 (1973) 115–25 (here, p. 123).

50. Incantation series *utukkū lemnūtu*; see ibid., 116–17; Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege*, 230; for an interpretation of this ritual, see Karen Radner, *Die Macht des Namens: Altorientalische Strategien zur Selbsterhaltung* (SANTAG 8; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005) 74–77.

in the mortuary banquet.[51] Additionally, a few texts from Mari attest the performance of the *kispu(m)* for some individually named deceased persons.[52] Since the *kispu(m)*-ritual can be understood as a ritual for personally known dead individuals, and since it was only used with regard to the LUGAL.MEŠ, one must conclude that the LUGAL.MEŠ were known by name and were still individually distinguishable. Therefore, the expression LUGAL.MEŠ was used as a term to designate individually-remembered kings. However, these texts do not allow one to specify further whether the term refers to "simple spirits" or whether the deceased were already exalted to the status of ancestor.

Since the LUGAL.MEŠ can be understood as individually remembered kings, the question remains how the *malikū* should be interpreted. The term *malikū* is controversial, and interpretations such as "ghosts or demons from the netherworld," "princes," and "counselors of the sovereign" have been suggested.[53] Recently, Jacquet has

51. Jacquet, "Funerary Rites," 130.

52. This is the text Mari 12803, in which the Akkadian kings Sargon and Narām-Sîn are provided with a *kispu(m)* (for the most-recent extensive publication of this text, see Jean-Marie Durand and Michaël Guichard, "Les rituels de Mari," in *Recueil d'études à la mémoire de Marie-Thérèse Barrelet* [ed. D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand; Florilegium Marianum 3, Mémoires de NABU 4; Antony: SEPOA, 1997] 19–78 [here, pp. 63–70]); see also the letter ARM III 40 (A.2030), in which Zimri-Līm is asked by a priest (on behalf of the god Dagān) to perform a *kispu(m)* for the spirit of his deceased son Yaḫdun-Līm (see, for instance, Jean-Marie Durand, *Archives épistolaires de Mari* 1/1 [ARMT 26; Paris: Ed. Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1988] 449–50); and the text published by Materne in which a *kispu(m)* for the king's mother, ^{f}Adad-dūri, is attested (Jean-Pierre Materne, "L'année de Kahat dans la chronologie du règne de Zimri-Lim," *MARI* 2 [1983] 195–99, esp. p. 197 n. 12).

53. "Ghosts or demons from the netherworld": Jean Nougayrol, "Textes hépatoscopiques d'époque ancienne conservés au Musée du Louvre (III)," *RA* 44 (1950) 1–40 (here, pp. 32–33); Jussi Aro, "Besprechung: Archives Royales de Mari IX: Textes administratifs de la salle 5, publ. par M. Birot: Textes administratifs de la salle 5 du Palais, transcrits., trad. et commentés par M. Birot," *OLZ* 56 (1961) 603–5 (here, p. 604); Madeleine L. Burke, *Textes administratifs de la Salle 111 du palais* (ARMT 11; Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1963) 139; Birot, *Textes administratifs*, 24; John F. Healey, "*Malku : mlkm : Anunnaki*," *UF* 7 (1975) 235–38 (here, pp. 236–37); Talon, "Les offrandes funéraires," 69–70; André Finet, "Une requête d'Išme-Dagan à Zimri-Lim," in *Miscellanea Babylonica: Mélanges offerts à Maurice Birot* (ed. J.-M. Durand and J.-R. Kupper; Paris: Éd. Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1985) 85–90 (here, p. 90). "Princes": Jean-Marie Durand, "La situation historique des Šakkanakku: Nouvelle approche," *MARI* 4 (1985) 147–72 (here, p. 159 n. 55). "Counselors of the sovereign": Jean Bottéro,

shown that the term *malikū* derives from the West Semitic root *mlk* and can also have the meaning "king" at Mari, where the local form *muluk* and the correct Akkadian form *malik* are both attested. The meaning "king" for *malik* is also confirmed by some personal names in which the name of a god is combined with the word *malik*, such as "Addu-malik." In this understanding, the name can be translated "Addu is king." The other proposed understandings of the term *malikū* would lead to some unlikely identities for the god, such as "Addu is ghost," "Addu is prince," or "Addu is counselor."[54]

Thus, two terms with the meaning "king" are—again—purposefully distinguished and used in connection with mortuary offerings. In relation to the named examples from Ugarit above, I propose that the term *malikū* refers to former kings, who were no longer remembered individually.[55] Since they did not belong to the group designated LUGAL.MEŠ, these *malikū* were not called by name but were remembered as the ancestral collective, which guaranteed that they would still be provisioned with food.

4. Summary of the Various Stages of Existence of the Dead

The schema in fig. 10 comprises the data from Qaṭna, Mari, and Ugarit resulting from my investigations. The archaeological record from Qaṭna indicates that the status of the deceased was changed twice after the primary burial. The primary burial was most likely accompanied by rituals that served to integrate the spirit of the deceased individual into the society of the netherworld. These rituals included, among other things, the offering of fresh food. At this stage of existence, the deceased Ugaritic king still bore the title *malku*.

Textes économiques et administratifs (ARMT 7; Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1957) 190; Donald J. Wiseman, "Review: M. L. Burke, *Textes Administratifs de la Salle III du Palais* (Archives royales de Mari, XI) 1963," *JSS* 10/1 (1965) 124–26 (here, p. 125); Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege*, 65–69.

54. Idem, "LUGAL.MEŠ et *malikum*," 61–62; idem, *Documents relatifs aux dépenses*, 49c.

55. In this regard, my understanding of the term differs from Jacquet's interpretation; he concludes that the term *malikū* refers to members of the royal family who were supposed to have become kings but died before this happened (idem, "LUGAL.MEŠ et *malikum*," 64; idem, "Les Rituels," 393; idem, "Calendrier et culte," 413; idem, *Documents relatifs aux dépenses*, 49; idem, "Funerary Rites," 129).

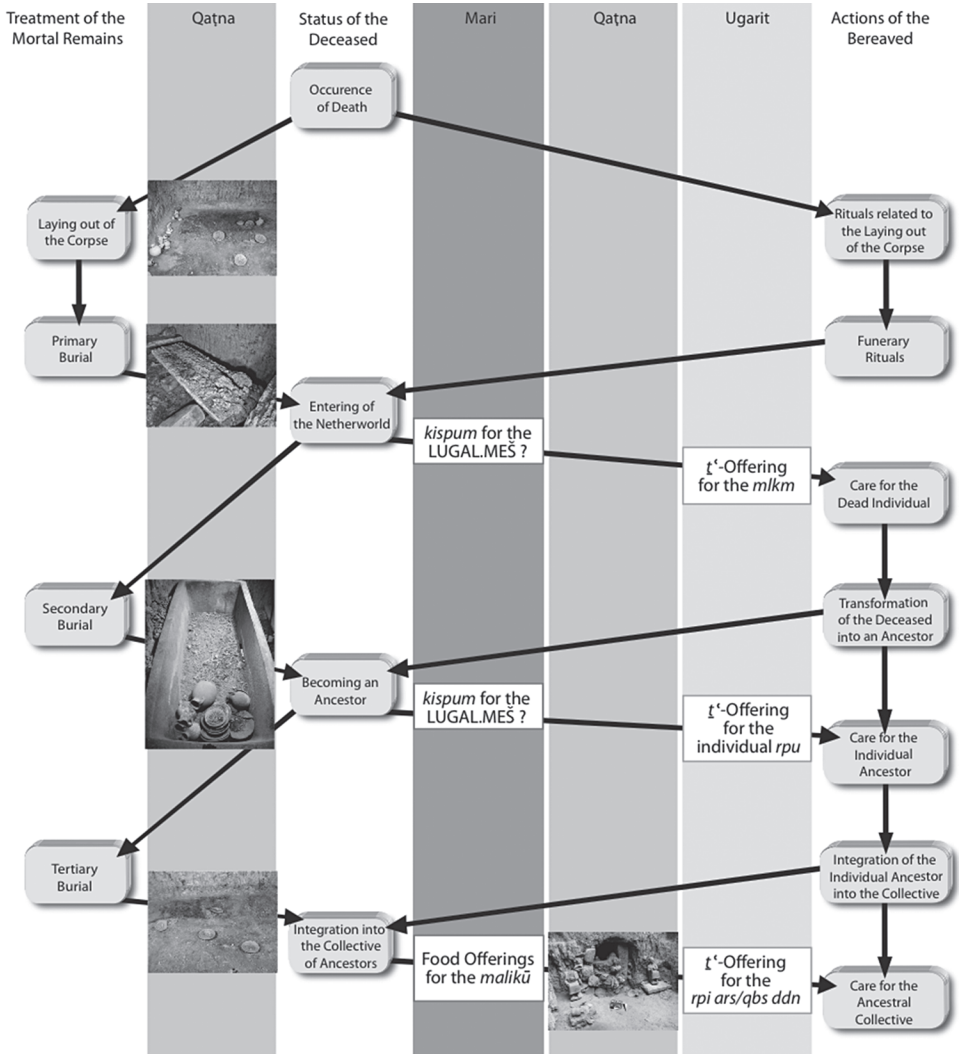
Treatment of the Mortal Remains
Qaṭna
Status of the Deceased
Mari
Qaṭna
Ugarit
Actions of the Bereaved
Occurence of Death
Laying out of the Corpse
Rituals related to the Laying out of the Corpse
Primary Burial
Funerary Rituals
Entering of the Netherworld
kispum for the LUGAL.MEŠ ?
ṯ'-Offering for the mlkm
Care for the Dead Individual
Secondary Burial
Transformation of the Deceased into an Ancestor
Becoming an Ancestor
kispum for the LUGAL.MEŠ ?
ṯ'-Offering for the individual rpu
Care for the Individual Ancestor
Tertiary Burial
Integration of the Individual Ancestor into the Collective
Integration into the Collective of Ancestors
Food Offerings for the malikū
ṯ'-Offering for the rpi ars/qbs ddn
Care for the Ancestral Collective

Fig. 10. Summary of the processes that took place after a person's death with regard to food offerings and feasting.

At the stage of secondary burial, the deceased still maintained his individual identity and may have been exalted to the status of ancestor. The change of status was again accompanied by fresh food offerings as part of another set of rituals. This change of status would coincide with the individually named *rāpiʾūma* in the Ugaritic texts. Either after the exaltation of the deceased to the status of ancestor

Fig. 11. The southwestern area of the main chamber of the royal tomb with two stone benches (photo: Konrad Wita, © Qaṭna-Project, University of Tübingen).

or directly after the primary burial, the dead in Mari were cared for by the *kispu(m)* for the LUGAL.MEŠ. This implies that they were cared for by regular food offerings.

In the tertiary burial in the royal tomb of Qaṭna, the dead were integrated into a collective, possibly a collective of ancestors. From this point on, they were provided with food through anonymous ancestor statues. This stage of existence was referred to in Ugarit with the title "*rāpi'ūma* of the netherworld" and its parallel, "assemblage of Didānu," as well as with the term *malikū* at Mari.

Hence, the archaeological record of Qaṭna and the texts from Mari and Ugarit give the impression that the royal dead underwent at least two (three in Qaṭna and Ugarit) stages. Additionally, as can be seen from the textual and archaeological evidence, the dead were provided with food offerings at all the various stages.

5. Feasting with the Dead

One last issue that should be addressed here is the question of whether any of these rituals—the transformation of the dead from

one state to another or the regular care for the dead in the afterlife—was accompanied by feasting rituals during which the bereaved dined with the dead.

One particular area in the royal tomb of Qaṭna that is of special interest in this regard is the southwestern corner of the main chamber, where two stone benches were found almost empty (see fig. 11). Pfälzner proposed that these benches functioned as places for people to sit while dining in the royal tomb.[56] However, this interpretation is not supported by the finds in the area. The several stacks of ceramic bowls found above and underneath the benches do not necessarily indicate dining activities: this kind of assemblage has also been found elsewhere in the tomb.[57] Nor do the animal bones in this area lead automatically to the proposed interpretation, since most of them were found articulated, which means that the bones were presumably the remains of food offerings, not leftovers from a banquet.[58] In the southwestern corner between the benches, some scattered human bones were found.[59] This bone assemblage indicates that, at least at some point in time, burials took place in this area, possibly on the stone benches themselves.

Nevertheless, various finds in different areas of the tomb do suggest that dining activities occurred within the hypogeum, such as, for instance, animal bones found in the eastern chamber containing cut marks. The marks are traces of the disjointing of the animals as well as traces of cutting the flesh off the bones, which is only necessary if the meat was intended for consumption.[60] Another detail that supports the hypothesis of dining in the royal tomb is the observation by Witzel and Reifarth that the dead in the royal tomb were heated for over an hour at a temperature of about 250–300° C.[61] This treatment of the corpse would have reduced the bodily fluids before interment

56. Pfälzner, "Archaeological Investigations," 58.

57. Paoletti, "Die keramischen Funde," 294–95.

58. Vila, "Les restes de faune," 385–91.

59. Witzel and Kreutz, "First Results of the Anthropological and Palaeopathological Examination," 176; Witzel, "Anthropologische Untersuchungen," 377–78.

60. See Vila, "Les restes de faune," 399.

61. Reifarth and Drewello, "Textile Spuren in der Königsgruft," 474; Reifarth, "Die Textilien vom Bestattungstisch," 519; Witzel and Kreutz, "First Results of the Anthropological and Palaeopathological Examination," 177–79; Witzel, "Anthropologische Untersuchungen," 369–70, fig. 2.

and thus reduced the stench in the tomb.[62] Thus, the cutting marks on the animal bones and the probably deliberate reduction of the smell make it more likely that some kind of feasting took place.

The only area that would have supported feasting is where the two benches appear in the southwestern corner, though the aforementioned human bones in that area indicate that, at least at some earlier period, this area was used for burials. This means that the function of this area changed at some point into a location where the bereaved dined. Therefore, assuming that some feasting activities did take place within the tomb, it seems likely that these feasts accompanied the rituals during which the deceased were transferred from one state of existence into the next. However, a regular (for example, monthly) feasting ritual cannot, in my opinion, be deduced from the archaeological record.

With regard to the texts from Mari and Ugarit, not one explicitly mentions feasting activities by the bereaved in relation to rituals for the dead, though there are references that suggest that some kind of feasting by the attendees did take place. Some of the *kispu(m)*-texts from Mari, for instance, attest that the king was responsible for, or at least should have been present during the ritual.[63] It can also be assumed that several members of the royal family and specific priests attended the festive event. ARMT 12 499, which mentions extensive foodstuffs, is also remarkable in this regard: it documents a *kispu(m)*-ritual on a date when Ḫaya-sumu, king of Ilanṣurā and husband of two of Zimri-Līm's daughters, visited Mari.[64] Thus, one can assume not only that he attended the ritual ceremony but also that the larger amount of food was due to his presence and the resulting larger group. This would mean that the attendees of these rituals ate at least some of the food mentioned in the *kispu(m)*-lists during an act of feasting.

The situation found in the texts from Ugarit is the same as was found at Mari; explicit proof that the bereaved (or, the attendees at

62. Witzel and Kreutz, "First Results of the Anthropological and Palaeopathological Examination," 185; see also Pfälzner, "How Did They Bury?" 209.

63. The most prominent example from Mari is the text Mari 12803 (see, for instance, Durand and Guichard, "Les rituels de Mari," 63–70).

64. Jack M. Sasson, "The Calendar and Festivals of Mari during the Reign of Zimri-Lim," in *Studies in Honor of Tom B. Jones* (ed. M. A. Powell and R. H. Sack; AOAT 203; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979) 119–41 (here, p. 126).

the ritual acts) participated in a funerary or mortuary banquet at the time when the dead were provided with food offerings is missing. However, several texts provide some indication that this may have been true. *KTU* 1:161, for instance, petitions for the well-being of the succeeding king, Ammurapi, and for Queen Ṯarriyelli (lines 31–33). It seems likely that a reference to these two bereaved individuals alone indicates that they were the most important participants in the ritual and probably the hosts of the ceremony. Additionally, in the so-called *rāpiʾūma*-texts (*KTU* 1:20–1.22), El invites the *rāpiʾūma* to a feast.[65] As soon as they arrive, they are welcomed by King Danʾilu. If one presupposes that these texts reflect actual ritual feasts, at least to some extent, we can deduce that these feasts for the *rāpiʾūma* were hosted by the priests of El and/or by the king. If they were indeed the hosts of ceremonial acts during which a feast was held for the deceased, then it is unlikely that they themselves did not participate in it; consequently, some feasting by the living participants can be postulated.

If one accepts that some feasting activities by the bereaved occurred on the occasion of funerals in Qaṭna and Ugarit, this would have taken place inside the Royal Hypogeum in Qaṭna or possibly in various places throughout the palace of Qaṭna and, accordingly, of Ugarit.[66] In Ugarit and Mari, feasting activities can also be presumed to have taken place as part of care for the dead after interment. These feasts served several purposes on various levels at the same time. As Priscilla Keswani has precisely framed it, "Beyond merely

65. Most recently published in Pardee, "Nouvelle étude épigraphique." On the basis of the publication by Pardee, the term *marziḥu* can no longer be applied to this feast. Therefore, an application of this term to the cult of the dead is not attested at Ugarit at all. For a different view on this matter, see Baruch Margalit, "The Ugaritic Feast of the Drunken Gods: Another Look at RS 24.258 (KTU 1.114)," *Maarav* 2 (1979–80) 65–120 (here, pp. 101–3); Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 87; Marvin H. Pope, "A Divine Banquet at Ugarit," in *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring* (ed. J. F. Efird; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1972) 170–203 (here, pp. 192–93); idem, "Notes on the Rephaim Texts from Ugarit," in *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein* (ed. M. de Jong Ellis; Hamden, CT: Archon, 1977) 163–82 (here, p. 166); compare also John L. McLaughlin, "The *marzeaḥ* at Ugarit," *UF* 23 (1991) 265–81 (here, p. 281); Lange, "Food and Libation Offerings," 172.

66. For the places where feasting activities could have taken place, see also my "Food and Libation Offerings," 173; idem, "Food Offerings in the Royal Tomb."

'giving the dead their due', funerals are often focal contexts for the negotiation of social hierarchies, the affirmation of social alliances, and the articulation of sanctified propositions about relationships between individuals, groups, their ancestors, and the cosmos."[67] This is especially true for funerary and mortuary banquets, for which the bereaved gather and social-status symbols are displayed. On the one hand, the banquets supplied the dead with food, thereby appeasing the spirits in the netherworld. Thus, they accomplished the cultic-religious mandate to care for the dead.[68] On the other hand, this communal feasting served several social and political purposes. The gathering of the bereaved reinforced the ties between the deceased and the bereaved.[69] Furthermore, with this meal and the invoking of the deceased family members, the bereaved drew upon and identified with their heritage and origin, legitimizing their position in society.[70] These aspects of social relations were emphasized every time a banquet was held in relation to the family's deceased, regardless

67. Keswani, *Mortuary Ritual*, 1.

68. A quotation from the Sumerian Gilgamesh epic illustrates the necessity of these food offerings: Tablet XII 152–53: (152) *šá e-ṭem-ma-šú pa-qí-da la i-šu-ú ta-mur a-ta-mar* (153) *šu-ku-la-at di-qa-ri ku-si-pat aka-li šá ina su-qí* [*n*]*a-da-a ik-kal*. Gilgamesh asks Enkidu: (152) "Did you see the one whose ghost has no provider of funerary offerings?" And Enkidu answers: (152–53) "I saw (him). He eats the scrapings from the pot (and) crusts of bread that are thrown away in the street" (transliteration and translation by George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 734–35).

69. Aldina da Silva, "Offrandes alimentaires aux morts en Mésopotamie," *Religiologiques* 17 (1998) 9–17 (here, pp. 15–17). Da Silva refers to the *kispu(m)*-ceremony and the assumed derivation from *kasāpu(m)*, vowel class a/u, "to chip, break off a piece, to trim" (*CAD* K 241–42, s.v. *kasāpu* A), which is not correct: *kasāpu(m)*, vowel class i/i, "to present a funerary offering" (*CAD* K 241–42, s.v. *kasāpu* B) is, rather, a denominalization of *kispu(m)*. Nonetheless, da Silva's interpretation of the social relevance of the respective ceremonies is valid; see also Gebhard J. Selz, "'Tief ist der Brunnen der Vergangenheit': Zu 'Leben' und 'Tod' nach Quellen der mesopotamischen Frühzeit–Interaktionen zwischen Diesseits und Jenseits," in *Zwischen Euphrat und Tigris: Österreichische Forschungen zum Alten Orient* (ed. F. Schipper; Reihe Wiener Offene Orientalistik 3; Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2004) 39–59 (here, p. 51 n. 152).

70. See, for instance, Dagmar Kühn, *Totengedenken im Alten Testament und bei den Nabatäern: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Studie* (AOAT 311; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2005) 6. The political or, better perhaps, the family's economic and social motivation for elaborate feasting activities on the occasion of funerals is discussed by Brian Hayden, "Funerals as Feasts: Why Are They So Important?" *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 19 (2009) 29–52; though with a well-reasoned critique by Martin Jones, Christine A. Hastorf, Ryan Rabett, and Chris Fowler at the end of Hayden's article.

of whether the ceremony was held on the occasion of a burial, the change of status of the deceased, or an act of commemoration.

6. Conclusion

The royal families of Mari, Qaṭna, and Ugarit conceived of several stages of existence for the dead. The integration of the deceased into the netherworld through primary burial as well as later changes of status undergone by the dead were accompanied by food offerings. These offerings were either presented to the individual dead or, after their incorporation into the collective of ancestors, to the collective. However, the texts from Mari suggest that the dead were also provided with regular food offerings during the *kispu(m)*-ritual at the different stages of existence. Even though explicit proof is missing, several indications lead to the conclusion that at least some (if not all) of the described rituals were accompanied by feasting ceremonies on the part of the living and that these ceremonies had cultic-religious as well as social implications.

Power to Unite and Power to Divide: Sacred Feasting and Social Change at Iron II Tel Dan

Jonathan S. Greer

Identifying evidence of change in the material record continues to be an important objective in modern archaeology. It serves as the essential first step for a variety of methodologies employed to aid in the more difficult task of explaining the underlying causes that may have triggered the assumed change.[1] Individuals who work with remains from historical periods have traditionally leaned heavily on any associated texts in explaining change, although, with the increasing recognition of bias in historical accounts, the priority given to written sources has been called into question—especially in regard to biblical texts.[2] As a result, recent attempts at reconstructing the history underlying the biblical accounts have often downplayed the text and elevated archaeology, supplemented by the interpretive models of anthropology, to the place of prominence.[3] Still others, heeding the valid critiques without ignoring written sources, have sought to employ new methods alongside the use of texts, critically examined, and to promote an integrated methodology that takes into account a variety of data sets.[4]

1. See, e.g., Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice* (6th ed.; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012) 17.

2. For a recent survey and evaluation of the some of the issues, see William G. Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: When Archaeology and the Bible Intersect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012) 11–34.

3. See the recent exchange between Nadav Na'aman ("Does Archaeology Really Deserve the Status of a 'High Court' in Biblical and Historical Research?" in *Between Evidence and Ideology* [ed. B. Becking and L. L. Grabbe; OtSt 59; Leiden: Brill, 2010] 165–83) and Israel Finkelstein ("Archaeology as a High Court in Ancient Israelite History: A Reply to Nadav Na'aman," *JHebS* 10 [2010] 1–8).

4. For an explicit statement of this sort of methodology, see the essays in Thomas E. Levy, ed., *Historical Biblical Archaeology and the Future: The New Pragmatism* (London: Equinox, 2010), especially the editor's introductory essay, "The New Pragmatism: Integrating Anthropological, Digital, and Historical Biblical Archaeologies," 3–42.

Indeed, an integrated approach often results in reconstructions with significant explanatory power, as I endeavor to demonstrate in this essay. In exploring social change in the Northern Kingdom of ancient Israel, I begin by laying out architectural, zooarchaeological, and ceramic evidence for change in eating practices in the sacred precinct of Tel Dan in northern Israel.[5] I then engage recent anthropological discussions about "feasting" to suggest the significance of these changes. Finally, I integrate the biblical text with the model to suggest that the change observed in feasting practice at Tel Dan tracks a transition in ancient Israel from a communal people to a hierarchical kingdom, and I highlight the role that feasting played in this transformation.

1. Archaeological Evidence for Change in Cultic Eating Practices at Tel Dan

Tel Dan (Tell el-Qadi) undoubtedly boasts some of the most impressive cultic remains associated with Israelite worship in the Iron Age II period, and if, as the biblical text asserts, it was one of the main shrines of the Northern Kingdom (1 Kgs 12:29), it serves as an appropriate representative context in which to assess sociopolitical changes promoted by the monarchy. Preliminary publications of the excavations carried out in Area T of Tel Dan from 1968 to 1993 under the direction of Avraham Biran describe a large sacred precinct with the remnants of temple-like architecture, including a massive raised podium (Biran's *bamah*), on which a temple probably stood, and traces of what was apparently a monumental four-horned altar—the largest recovered example from this period.[6] More than three cubic meters of animal bones were also collected from Area T throughout the decades of excavation, as well as massive amounts of ceramic material and other paraphernalia associated with animal slaughter, preparation, and consumption. Taken together, this evidence suggests intensive cultic eating activities in the precinct, as I have argued in greater detail elsewhere.[7]

5. See further my *Dinner at Dan: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sacred Feasts at Iron Age II Tel Dan and Their Significance* (CHANE 66; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

6. See Avraham Biran, *Biblical Dan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 1994), especially pp. 159–210.

7. Greer, *Dinner at Dan*, 43–96; see also idem, "Cultic Practices at Tel Dan: Was the Northern Kingdom Deviant?" *BAR* 38 (2012) 26, 67.

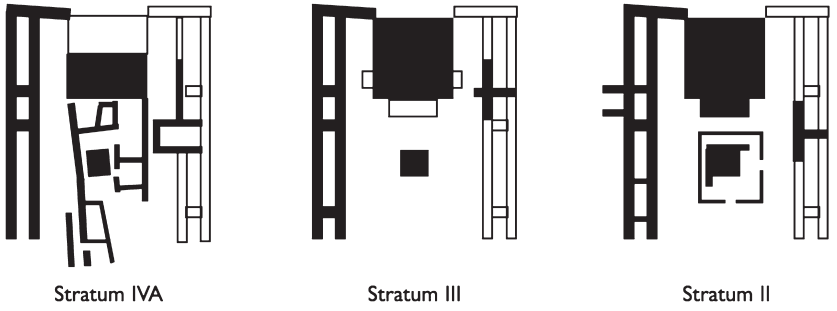

Fig. 1. Schematic plans of the sacred precinct at Tel Dan, showing architectural changes by stratum (based on Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 182, 188, and 205, respectively).

The character of these feasts, however, was hardly static. Change in the associated eating practices over time is suggested by three main factors: (a) architectural modification within the precinct, (b) non-random patterns of animal bone distribution, and (c) non-random patterns of decorative ceramic concentration within a certain area of the precinct—each of which will be discussed below.

A. Architectural Changes

The change in the arrangement of sacred space delineated by the major architectural features of the enclosure is one of the decisive factors in differentiating the strata of the precinct (see fig. 1).[8] In the earliest phase (Stratum IVA; late tenth/early ninth century B.C.E.), the reconstructed plan is somewhat haphazard. A cluster of small structures surrounded the central altar structure to the south of the northern podium. These rooms and courtyards contained an olive press, large pithoi, and several *tabun*s. In the next phase (Stratum III; mid-ninth century–early eighth century B.C.E.), these structures were apparently leveled and covered over by a thick "yellow floor" of travertine created by the intensive dressing of fine ashlars, resulting in an open courtyard. The quality of the workmanship dramatically improved and, in addition to the use of dressed ashlars, decorative elements of carved basalt may have been introduced in this phase. In the final phase (Stratum II; mid-eighth century B.C.E.), the high

8. See Biran, *Biblical Dan*, 159–233.

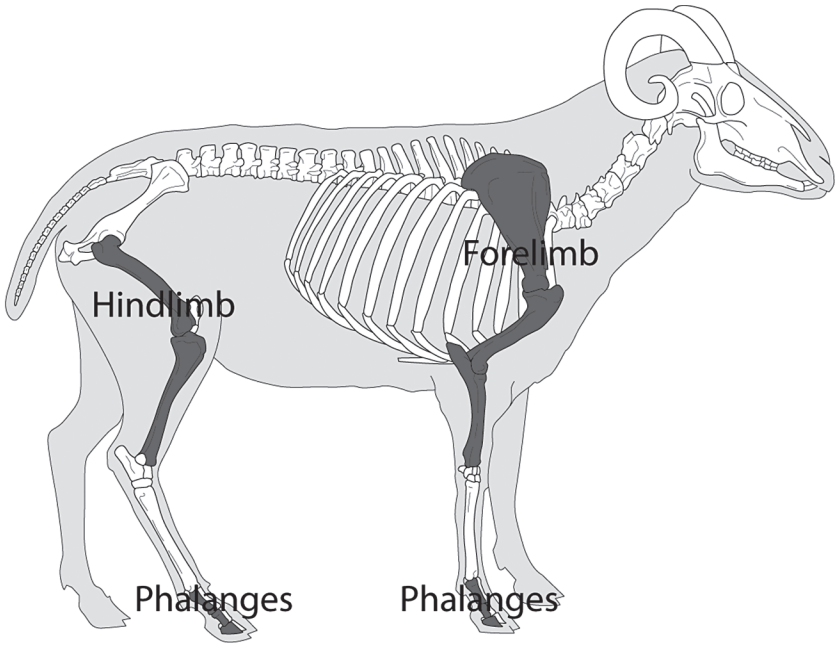

Fig. 2. Anatomical Location of Forelimb and Hindlimb Portions and Phalanges on a Sheep. Adapted from the illustration by M. Coutureau, after R. Barone, *Anatomie comparée des mammifères domestiques* (Paris: Vigot, 1976), made available for public use at www.archeozoo.org/en-article134.html.

quality was maintained in the additional features of a monumental staircase and a low retaining wall around the central altar.[9]

B. Zooarchaeological Changes

In a recent study of previously excavated material from the Biran excavations, I isolated and analyzed the contents of seven deposits of animal bone and ceramic remains from the precinct.[10] In addition to identifying two main spheres of activity—the western chambers associated with priests and the courtyard associated with common worshipers—the study also suggested change in eating practices over time. Although the complex stratigraphy of Area T prohibited a precise sequencing of each of the deposits, an opportunity to assess diachronic trends was created by analyzing two superimposed de-

9. On the debate over the date of the stairs, see Andrew R. Davis, *Tel Dan in Its Northern Cultic Context* (SBLABS 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013) 68–70.

10. See my *Dinner at Dan*, especially pp. 43–96.

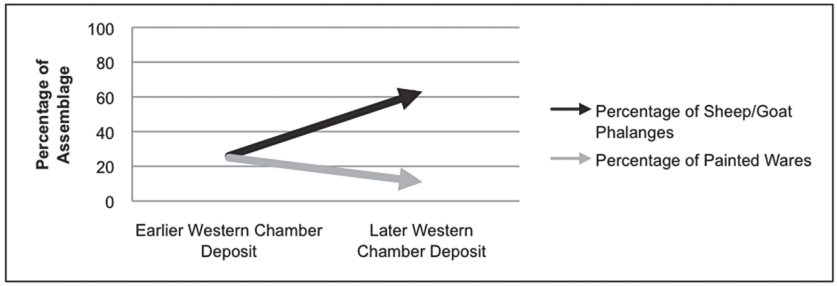

Fig. 3. Trend lines showing the decrease in the percentage of painted wares (gray) and the increase in the percentage of phalanges (black), moving from the earlier deposit of the western chamber to the later deposit.

posits in the western chamber of the precinct (Biran's aptly named "Altar Room"). The earlier deposit may be assigned to the end of Stratum III activity, and the later deposit is clearly associated with the final stage of Stratum II.

While both deposits yielded a much higher proportion of sheep/goat phalanges ("toe" bones; see fig. 2) compared with meaty, long bone fragments (i.e., forelimb and hindlimb) than any of the other deposits, important for the purposes of this paper is the statistically significant increase in the percentage of phalanges in the later phase.[11] In the earlier phase, phalanges constitute 26% of the assemblage, but in the later phase this figure climbs to 63% (see fig. 3). At the same time, the overall concentration of faunal remains drops dramatically from 38 bones to only 8.

C. Ceramic Changes

An examination of the material contents of these same two deposits of the western chamber also allowed for an assessment of change in the ceramic record.[12] Again, these deposits were set apart from the other deposits of the courtyard area, in this case due to a much higher concentration of painted ware fragments compared

11. Statistical difference or similarity was established on the basis of Pearson's ($\times^2$) test, following standard practice: if the probability (p) that the samples were the same was less than 0.05, the "null hypothesis" (i.e., that the two samples are from the same distribution) was ruled out with 95% confidence, and the samples were considered to be statistically different. In this case, $p = 0.047$, though the reliability of the statistical evaluation is somewhat diminished by the small sample size.

12. See my *Dinner at Dan*, 72–76.

with undecorated diagnostic sherds. Here, however, the percentage of painted wares drops from 25% of the assemblage in the earlier deposit to 11% in the later, though the small sample size minimizes the potential significance attributable to this change.[13] Nevertheless, as portrayed in fig. 3, at the same time that this apparent decrease in painted wares occurs (represented in gray), the percentage of phalanges, discussed above, increases (represented in black).

These observations of architectural, zooarchaeological, and ceramic change have little significance on their own. When considered within the broader context of the nature of feasting and the role that feasting played in creating and maintaining social structures, however, these observations take on new meaning.

2. Anthropological Models of "Feasting" and the Significance of the Changes Observed

Feasting in the ancient world has been a topic of significant academic interest over the last two decades, and this curiosity shows no sign of waning, as the essays in this volume demonstrate.[14] Two important reasons for this enduring interest are (1) the inextricable link between eating events and social structures and (2) the potentially measurable character of these events—and changes in associated practices over time—through the methods of archaeology.

In regard to the first reason, numerous studies in a variety of contexts have demonstrated that communal meals provide much more than nourishment. They also serve as opportunities to create and leverage power.[15] Indeed, the communal nature of a feast—with its

13. Here, $p = 0.059$ (see n. 11 above).

14. In addition to this volume, see other relatively recent essay collections, including Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001); Tamara L. Bray, ed., *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003); James C. Wright, ed., *The Mycenaean Feast* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2004); Paul Halstead and John C. Barrett, eds., *Food, Cuisine and Society in Prehistoric Greece* (SSAA 5; Oxford: Oxbow, 2004); Katheryn C. Twiss, ed., *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (CAI 34; Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 2007); and Susan Pollock, "Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces: An Introduction," *eTopoi: Journal for Ancient Studies* Special Volume 2 (*Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Space*; 2012) 1–20.

15. In this regard, see Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, "Digesting the Feast: Good to Eat, Good to Drink, Good to Think," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and

inherent scales of contrast between public and private, formal and informal, included and excluded—is ripe for manipulation through the development of rituals that emphasize these differences as tools for "elite" formation.[16] Yet, paradoxically, feasts can also promote solidarity among members of the larger whole and, by engaging in "leveling" rituals,[17] serve as events designed to gather together diverse members of a society for a common purpose (economic, national, religious, etc.). While each manifestation of feasting may gravitate toward the pole of elite exclusion, on the one hand, or communal solidarity, on the other, many feasts exhibit characteristics of both with fluctuation between the poles over time, depending on the goals of the hosts.[18]

It is the identification of this fluctuation over time that brings us to our second reason for an enduring interest in ancient feasts. Unlike abstract thought patterns confined to the human mind, feasting provides a manifestation of thinking that has a material reflex:

B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 12–16; cf. Mary Douglas, "Standard Social Uses of Food: Introduction," in *Food in the Social Order: Studies of Food and Festivities in Three American Communities* (ed. M. Douglas; New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984) 1–39. See also my *Dinner at Dan*, 2–5.

16. These themes dominate the classic work of Jack Goody (*Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982]) and serve as the overarching theme in Polly W. Wiessner and Wulf Schiefenhövel, *Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1996). See Valasia Isaakidou, "Cooking in the Labyrinth: Exploring 'Cuisine' at Bronze Age Knossos," in *Cooking Up the Past: Food and Culinary Practices in the Neolithic and Bronze Age Aegean* (ed. C. Mee and J. Renard; Oxford: Oxbow, 2007) 5–24.

17. See Polly W. Wiessner, "Leveling the Hunter: Constraints on the Status Quest in Foraging Societies," in *Food and Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (ed. P. W. Wiessner and W. Schiefenhövel; Providence, IN: Berghahn, 1996) 171–91.

18. See Justin S. E. Lev-Tov and Kevin McGeough, "Examining Feasting in Late Bronze Age Syro-Palestine through Ancient Texts and Bones," in *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (ed. K. C. Twiss; CAI 34; Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007) 85–111 (here, p. 87); Susan Pollock, "Feasts, Funerals, and Fast Food in Early Mesopotamian States," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 17–38 (here, pp. 17–18); Michael Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast: Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics, and Power in African Contexts," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 65–114 (here, p. 87); Sharon Zuckerman, "'. . . Slaying Oxen and Killing Sheep, Eating Flesh and Drinking Wine . . .': Feasting in Late Bronze Age Hazor," *PEQ* 139 (2007) 186–204.

organic residue in the form of faunal remains and chemical traces of other food substances, as well as material remains from vessels employed in the feasts. Differences in the types of foods consumed, in the vessels used, and even in particular movements or rituals can all signal change. More significantly, this change in practice often reflects larger changes taking place in a given society, which opens a unique window for us to understand a particular culture.[19] Viewing the observed changes laid out above in light of the social power of feasts just described, I suggest that we have evidence at Tel Dan of a transition from inclusive feasts, intended to unify the feasters and minimize disparity, to exclusive feasts, which were intended to reinforce social hierarchy and maximize distinction, and I will trace this evidence stratum by stratum below.

Beginning with the earliest Stratum IVA (late tenth/early ninth century B.C.E.), one notes that the clusters of small structures lack definitive characteristics of extensive formal regulation. Instead, they bear greater similarity to domestic contexts, where food preparation would have taken place communally by the use of several *tabun*s and a single olive press, which was undoubtedly charged with cultic significance.[20] The large pithoi, too, may suggest shared resources, and the variation in form, style, and quality of the general ceramic repertoire, discussed elsewhere,[21] may also suggest a less regulated atmosphere. One may envision the participants as family members who brought their own cooking and eating vessels of varying types, rather than individual worshipers receiving standardized vessels from a centralized power. The relative absence of large serving vessels also fits with this reconstruction: family groups gathered around their cooking pots and served their stewed sacrificial meat directly into individual bowls, rather than into vessels used for mass distribution in a more regulated environment. In this way, the feasts served to reinforce traditional social structures and build solidarity.

19. See Dietler and Hayden, "Digesting the Feast: Good to Eat, Good to Drink, Good to Think," 16–17; compare with Paul S. Goldstein, "From Stew-Eaters to Maize-Drinkers: The *Chicha* Economy and the Tiwanaku Expansion," in *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires* (ed. T. L. Bray; New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2003) 143–72.

20. See Lawrence E. Stager and Samuel R. Wolff, "Production and Commerce in Temple Courtyards: An Olive Press in the Sacred Precinct at Tel Dan," *BASOR* 243 (1981) 95–102.

21. See my *Dinner at Dan*, 73–76.

In Stratum III (mid-ninth century–early eighth century B.C.E.), however, the dressed ashlars, "yellow floor," and monumental architecture signal major changes in the social structure. The presence of regulation is now palpable, from the symmetrical layout of the precinct to the clearly observed spheres of activity marking out areas for priests and common worshipers.[22] Here, too, one recalls the high percentages of phalanges and painted wares in the western chambers discussed above as potential markers of increasing regulation, the former associated with the processing of animal skins[23] and the latter perhaps associated with an elite presence or with specialized roles. At the same time, the courtyard is remarkably open, allowing for a full range of movement, and the deposits from this space are rich with the remains of meals. Thus, while we observe some undeniable evidence of increasing regulation, there remain elements of continuity in the feasting activities, and the open plan of the precinct may suggest a more inclusive environment. Here, then, the feasts may have continued to serve a unifying purpose but were clearly under a centralized authority.

More dramatic still, in terms of social change, are the differences between Stratum III (mid-ninth century–early eighth century B.C.E.) and Stratum II (mid-eighth century B.C.E.). Another recent study by Andrew Davis has traced this transition by highlighting a number of architectural features that demonstrate a contrast between the "open" environment of Stratum III and the "closed" environment of Stratum II. He argues that in Stratum III worshipers had access to the central altar as well as to the northern podium, but in Stratum II these "non-elite" worshipers were barred from the central altar by the temenos wall and relegated to the western chambers for coexisting, family-centered rites that were perhaps loosely administered by priests.[24] Additionally, the increase in the percentage of phalanges mentioned here suggests an intensification of animal-skin processing (and, conversely, a decrease in eating activities) in the area of the

22. Ibid., 84–90; for a brief overview, see my "Cultic Practices at Tel Dan," 26, 67.

23. See Paula Wapnish and Brian Hesse, "Faunal Remains from Tel Dan: Perspectives on Animal Production at a Village, Urban, and Ritual Center," *Archaeozoologia* 4 (1991) 9–86 (here, p. 45). This association is based on an understanding of the process of skinning in which the phalanges, still in the hooves, are left intact with the skin in the initial stage of the process, before the hair and hooves are removed in preparation for tanning.

24. See this summarized in Davis, *Tel Dan in Its Northern Cultic Context*, 172–73.

western chambers assigned to the priests in this reconstruction.[25] This scenario is also congruent with the decrease in decorative wares, because, we theorize, there would have been less need for decorative wares in a processing center. The feasting and sacrificial activity of Stratum II, then, was apparently far more regulated and segregated, which the presence of the temenos wall that barred direct access to the altar certainly underscores.

3. Feasting with the Kings of Israel

Turning now to the biblical text, we find considerable convergence between the reconstruction presented above and the portrayal of the history of the Northern Kingdom known from the Hebrew Bible and extrabiblical sources sketched out in broad strokes below.[26]

The first king of the North, Jeroboam I, according to the biblical narrative (see 1 Kings 12), was faced with the difficult task of unifying the fragmented northern league in the wake of the fallout over Rehoboam's failure to concede to their pleas for relief. As part of his unification efforts, he is described as revivifying ancient Yahwistic centers at Dan and Bethel and establishing national pilgrim feasts, later manifestations of which are perhaps evidenced by the remains from Stratum IVA mentioned above. Indeed, in this stratum the overall absence of elite markers was noted, and the variety of pottery styles and types was seen to be consistent with the proposed egalitarian, family-based nature of these events. These feasts, then, would have served as mechanisms intended to build solidarity in the formative years of the burgeoning state, celebrating the people's unity and reinforcing traditional ties.

Under the Omrides, however, the situation changed dramatically as the North ascended to its place as a regional power, a fact that is reflected in the biblical accounts (1 Kgs 16:24, 31; 22:39; 2 Kgs 3:4), other contemporary inscriptions (*KAI* 181; RIMA 3:22–24), and the

25. Greer, *Dinner at Dan*, 84–90; see Davis, *Tel Dan in Its Northern Cultic Context*, 101–5, for a somewhat different conclusion regarding the function of the western chambers.

26. What follows is a condensed version of the history outlined in my *Dinner at Dan*, 128–37; see also J. Maxwell Miller and John Haralson Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006) 221–391; and Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006) 168–253; cf. Megan Bishop Moore and Brad E. Kelle, *Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011) 266–333.

archaeological record.[27] Nevertheless, these kings often came into conflict with traditional structures (cf. 1 Kgs 21:1–16), and the feasting associated with this period (Stratum III) is representative of both aspects of their new identity. On the one hand, the communal nature of the feasts appears to have been maintained, as the variety of vessel types comparable to the variety observed in Stratum IVA and the "open," expanded architectural plan suggest. On the other hand, evidence of royal "elite" aspects, such as the monumental architecture and hints of a more regulated priesthood (as evidenced in the changes in the concentrations of phalanges and painted wares), were now present. The proposed feasts, then, suggest a transition point, reinforcing the notion of a larger community but in the shadow of the crown.

Following Jehu's bloody coup and purge (2 Kgs 8:25–10:27), the situation changed again under the Nimshides. The biblical texts suggest a shift to an intolerant Yahwism coupled with a newfound nationalism amid continued Aramean pressure that lasted until Assyrian intervention crippled Damascus (cf. RIMA 3:211, 213). The removal of Aram brought a certain degree of political relief and ushered in a period of expansion and prosperity, climaxing under Jeroboam II (cf. 2 Kgs 14:25), before internal turmoil and Assyrian aspirations resulted in the conquest of the Upper Galilee—surely including Dan—by Tiglath-pileser III in 732 B.C.E. (cf. 2 Kgs 15:29).[28] The associated feasts reconstructed for Stratum II exhibited several characteristics that parallel the increasing exclusivity of the movement suggested in the Bible. First, the feasting space itself became more segregated, most notably in respect to the altar area, which was restricted by the temenos wall. Second, this division appears to have carried over to the feasts themselves, a notion that is evidenced by the observation that the eating taking place in the western chambers, represented by faunal and ceramic remains, all but disappears. Third, concurrent with the lack of evidence of feasting activity, evidence for the processing of skins increases dramatically, suggesting that the priestly

27. Regardless of which chronology one follows, whether the "high" or the "low" (see, conveniently, Israel Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar, *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel—Invited Lectures Delivered at the Sixth Biennial Colloquium of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism, Detroit, October 2005* [SBLABS 17; ed. B. B. Schmidt; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007]), major building efforts are attributed to the Omrides.

28. See Rainey and Notley, *Sacred Bridge*, 230–32.

chambers may have become an efficient processing center, serviced by standardized sacrificial paraphernalia and rich in skins collected as dues. Thus, feasts in this phase were used as tools for division, further separating the priests from the people.

4. Conclusion

The discussion above has surveyed archaeological indicators for change in feasting practices in the Iron II precinct at Tel Dan, imbued these observations with significance drawn from recent anthropological theories of feasting, and integrated the resulting reconstructions with biblical data. These different viewpoints combine to form a plausible explanation for the nature and role of the historical developments of the feasts at Tel Dan—namely, that the Yahwistic cult-feasts at Dan were used at each stage for different aspects of kingdom building. The first feasting phase (Stratum IVA) emphasized corporate solidarity that reached back and embraced the tribal heritage of the people. The second feasting phase (Stratum III) maintained this traditional focus but embedded it in the context of a more fully developed monarchy. Finally, the third feasting stage (Stratum II) reinforced hierarchical structures, paving the way for a new elite. The social power of feasts was harnessed by the Northern kings for very different purposes indeed, demonstrating that by means of feasts the kings brandished the power to unite and the power to divide.

Menu: Royal Repasts and Social Class in Biblical Israel

Carol Meyers

Meals are more than the nutrition they provide. The source of the food, the company with whom one eats, the location of the repast, and the menu itself are all part of the context—social, political, economic, and religious—of a meal. This is true not only for daily fare but also, perhaps especially, for the consumption of food at feasts that mark special occasions or distinctive circumstances. Meals are imbued with meaning and provide insight into essential aspects of group life. Daily meals are a universal part of human existence, and special meals—feasts—have characterized human societies the world over, probably going back to the Upper Paleolithic.[1] However, perhaps because eating is such a ubiquitous aspect of life that it was long taken for granted, it is only in the past few decades that archaeologists and anthropologists have turned their attention to meals.[2] Biblical scholars too now recognize the importance of food and feasting for learning about the Bible and the biblical world.[3] A number of significant publications engaging social science insights—and focusing on the political, social, and religious aspects of feasts or

1. Margaret W. Conkey, "The Identification of Prehistoric Hunter/Gatherer Aggregation Sites: The Case of the Altamira," *Current Anthropology* 21 (1980) 609–30.

2. Examples of this recent work include: Susan Pollock, ed., *eTopoi: Journal for Ancient Studies* Special Volume 2 (*Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Toward an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces*; 2012); Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, eds., *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001); Carole M. Counihan, "The Social and Cultural Uses of Food: Food and Community," in *The Cambridge World History of Food* (2 vols.; ed. K. F. Kiple and K. Conée Ornelas; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 1:1513–23; Katheryn C. Twiss, ed., *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (Occasional Paper 34; Carbondale: Center for Archaeological Investigation, Southern Illinois University, 2007).

3. Nathan MacDonald (*Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008] 1–12) provides an overview of the long absence of and now limited attention to food and eating in biblical studies.

on the content of daily meals—have appeared.[4] However, the food served at feasts has received less attention, despite the fact that food has symbolic as well as nutritional value.

Examining the food practices of any people means studying their "culinary culture," the attitudes and tastes that develop in every society in relation to the preparation and consumption of food.[5] The culinary culture of a complex society usually involves differentials, with the diet of ordinary folk being simpler and less plentiful than the diet of elites, for intertwined political, social, and economic reasons. A royal bureaucracy, for example, extracts surpluses from the different ecosystems of a realm, providing better meals for the palace than for the peasant farmers, as Samuel warns: a king "will take the *best* [my emphasis] of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers" (1 Sam 8:14–15), leaving the poorer crops for the farm families. Because food can be a powerful signifier of social hierarchy, differentiation in the nature of meals is a marker of sociopolitical stratification.

In this essay, I focus on the culinary culture of biblical royalty by considering the *menus* of their daily and festal meals according to information provided by biblical texts. First, their daily meals are identified. Then texts hinting at the menu of royal feasts are reviewed. Next, for comparative purposes, several royal repasts in other ancient Near Eastern cultures are described. Finally, the possible relation of the menus of biblical royalty to sociopolitical stratification in ancient Israel is considered.

A word first about the reliability of biblical texts. Because most of them take shape late in the monarchy and reach their final form in the exilic or postexilic period, the historicity of biblical information about the earlier periods is uncertain. However, some historical authenticity is likely because earlier sources are embedded in the

4. E.g., MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone*; idem, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008); Peter Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel: Deuteronomy's Identity Politics in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context* (BZAW 424; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011); Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013); Carol Meyers, "Feast Days and Food Ways: Religious Dimensions of Household Life," in *Family and Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studi*es (ed. R. Albertz et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).

5. See Stephen Mennell, Ann Murcott, and Anneke H. van Otterloo, *The Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet and Culture* (London: Sage and International Sociological Association, 1992) 20.

canonical form and also because of convergences between the Bible and both archaeological data and extrabiblical texts.[6] Moreover, even if the historicity of events is uncertain, the reliability of details is less problematic, for a degree of verisimilitude is necessary for ancient authors to communicate successfully with their audience. Details of meal events may be exaggerated, but the general outlines of the feasts are plausible.

1. Daily Fare of Biblical Royalty

The foods available to rulers, whether at everyday meals or at festal banquets, differed from the food of most people, although ordinary people did partake of special repasts at festivals and other ceremonial events.[7] A number of biblical texts show awareness that royalty and their guests or courtiers regularly indulged in special foods that were produced on crown lands, collected from the population base as taxes in kind, and perhaps also acquired through limited foreign trade or tribute.[8]

One example is found in Genesis. Jacob's poetic deathbed blessing proclaims that Asher, whose territory is the fertile coastal farmland of western Galilee, will have "rich" food and "royal delicacies" (Gen 49:20). The phrase *maʿădannê melek* refers to fine food suitable for the royal table, for the verbal forms of *ʿdn* express feasting or luxury.[9] The tribal name "Asher" alludes to good fortune (see Gen 30:13) and likewise suggests that Asher's allotment supports a culinary culture suitable for royalty. The David narratives in 2 Samuel provide two more examples. One appears in David's attempt to reward the Gileadite Barzillai for having provided food and other supplies to David and his men: "Come over with me, and I will provide for you in Jerusalem at my side" (2 Sam 19:34[33]). Barzillai declines, declaring that he is too old to appreciate palace perks: food, wine, and entertainment (2 Sam 19:36[35]), which are major components of

6. Note the subtitle of William G. Dever's latest book: *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Intersect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).

7. Meyers, "Feast Days and Foodways."

8. Tribute is mentioned in passages such as 2 Sam 8:2, 6; and 1 Kgs 5:1[4:21], although these are likely to be narrative ploys to present a powerful United Monarchy. Foreign trade was probably limited, judging from the relatively modest amounts of imported wares recovered from Iron II sites, especially in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

9. Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, "*ʿēden; ʿādan; ʿădīnâ; ʿădānîm; ʿednîâ; maʿădannîm; maʿădannōt*," *TDOT* 10:481–90 (here, p. 485).

feasts. The other example is in the narrative about David's promise to Jonathan not to cut off his "faithful love" from Jonathan's "house" (1 Sam 20:14–17). He adheres to this promise by taking special care of Jonathan's crippled son, Mephibosheth (Meribbaal in 1 Chr 8:34). Mephibosheth will always "have food to eat" because Ziba (a trusted servant of Saul) and his family are assigned to farm Mephibosheth's land. Even better, he "shall always eat at my table" (2 Sam 9:9–10). A place at the *king's table* means access to the food of royalty.

Several other biblical texts mention or allude to royal foods. When the Queen of Sheba visits the royal court, she is impressed by "the food of his [Solomon's] table" (2 Kgs 10:5), another instance of the "king's table" concept. The exiled Jehoiachin is pardoned by the Babylonian king and then receives a special place, a seat elevated above other rulers, and shares the king's table: he "dined regularly in the king's presence," receiving a daily food allotment (2 Kgs 25:29–30). Proverbs mentions etiquette for eating at the royal table and refers to special food: "When you sit down to eat with a ruler . . . do not desire the ruler's delicacies" (23:1–3); the word for "ruler" (*môšēl*) can refer to a king (see Josh 12:2), and the "delicacies" (*lĕmaṭammôtāyw*) of a royal meal are tasty foods not available to others.[10] Nehemiah reports that his abundant daily menu as governor of Yehud did not involve using "the food allowance of the governor" (Neh 5:14, 18); like kings, provincial governors had special repasts. Finally, the book of Daniel describes some lads from the Israelite "royal family" and "nobility" as being brought to Nebuchadnezzar's court to learn how to be courtiers; while receiving instruction in the local language and literature, they have access to royal repasts: "The king allotted daily rations to them from the king's food and from wine he drank" (Dan 1:5, NJPS)."[11]

In the aggregate, these texts indicate, as expected, that the daily fare of royalty differed from that of most other individuals. The concept of a "king's table" underscores the existence of a differentiated palace cuisine. The actual content of daily royal meals can be glimpsed in narratives about Saul, David, and Solomon, although

10. See Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 18B; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009) 720.

11. Compare with the Anchor Bible translation, which actually uses the word "menu": "the king assigned them a daily allotment of the royal menu and of the wine that he drank" (Louis F. Hartman and Alexander Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 23; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978] 127).

these passages may not list the totality of foods provided at the king's meal.

One passage describes a meal that Saul and his servants enjoy when visiting the medium of Endor. After helping him consult Samuel, she prepares a "fatted calf" (*ʿēgel marbēq*) along with unleavened bread (1 Sam 28:24). Calves selected for fattening were reserved for special occasions, in this case a royal repast.[12]

Two passages about David include menus. The first is the list of provisions that Abigail, an affluent woman with access to a variety of foodstuffs, brings to David and his men after her husband slights them. She provides "two hundred loaves, two skins of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs" (1 Sam 25:18). Meat is accompanied by grain-based foods and dried fruit. Another description of provisions for David and his men is found in the Barzillai incident at Mahanaim noted above. Barzillai and his associates provide David with equipment and also food: "wheat, barley, meal, parched grain, beans and lentils, honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from the herd" (2 Sam 17:28–29). Several varieties of grain appear, along with legumes, dairy products, and probably meat (see below).

As for Solomon, his daily fare takes royal culinary culture to another level in terms of the variety of animal protein and the quantity of all foods. His kingdom is organized into 12 districts, each providing food for the royal court for one month each year (1 Kgs 4:7). An official from each district is responsible for this provisioning and thereby earns the privilege of eating with the king and his courtiers: "Those officials supplied provisions for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table, each one in his month" (1 Kgs 5:7[4:27]).[13] The foodstuffs brought by these officers are enumerated in a list of the supplies for each day: "thirty cors of choice flour, and sixty cors of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty pasture-fed cattle, one hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted

12. See Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in the Bible* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 1998) 78. The divine messengers to Abraham and Sarah enjoy a similar meal: "a calf, tender and choice" (NJPS) along with bread and dairy products (Gen 18:6–8).

13. The phrase *kol-haqqārēb ʿel-šūlḥan hammelek* ("all who come to the king's table") denotes people who enjoy the king's beneficence, usually by virtue of their loyalty to the king as well as their fulfillment of economic and political obligations. Similar terminology is mentioned above: *ʿōkĕlê šūlḥan*, "eat at the (royal) table," appears in the Mephibosheth passage (2 Sam 9:11, 13) and is implied in the Barzillai narrative (2 Kgs 2:7).

fowl" (1 Kgs 5:2–3[4:22–23]). A variety of animal protein accompanies the two types of grains: four kinds of domesticated animals, including cows that were specially fattened (perhaps stall-fed), and also "pasture-fed"; three game animals (all of which appear as permitted food in Deut 14:5); and fowl that were caged to be fattened for special occasions.[14] The unusual variety of animals, most not available to ordinary folk, would be a characteristic of the royal table; and the amounts of all are improbably large.[15]

Some form of grain, which is present in all the menus, would be expected in a land where grains and grain products were a basic part of the Israelite diet for everyone, from kings to servants.[16] However, the variety in one of David's menus—four kinds of grain—and the exceedingly large quantities in the Solomonic menu distance the royal menus from the fare of ordinary folk.

Meat is the other item that the kings' meals have in common.[17] The presence of meat—preferably from oxen or calves or from young and tender sheep—is to be emphasized as a prestige food, whether the meal is in the palace or at another locale.[18] Meat is the *sine qua non* of special meals, whether for the king's table or for the festal meals of all, and its importance in sacrificial texts is no doubt related to its prominence as a desired food. The subsistence economy of ancient Palestine meant that animals were not daily fare for most

14. Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 153–54. The type of fowl (Hebrew *barbūr*) is uncertain.

15. Calculating how many people could have been fed at the king's table with these quantities (reported by Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2000] 212) produces figures in the tens of thousands, far more than the population of Jerusalem in the tenth century. Jerusalem's population was about 2,500 in the ninth century, probably less in the tenth century; see William G. Dever, "Archaeology, Urbanism, and the Rise of the Israelite State," in *Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* (ed. N. A. Mirau, W. E. Aufrecht, and S. W. Gauley; JSOTSup 244; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 172–93 (here, p. 183).

16. More than 75% of the daily caloric intake of the average person was supplied by grains; see David C. Hopkins, "Agriculture," *OEANE* 1:22–30 (here, p. 26).

17. Unless meat is absent from 2 Sam 17:29, if one reads with the Syriac: "the curd of the flock and the cheese of the herd"; so P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 9; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984) 392.

18. For a discussion of the importance of meat in the Bible and the ancient Near East, see Altmann, *Festive Meals*, 74–98.

people—thus meat's significance as festival or elite food.[19] Note that in Deuteronomy the availability of meat signifies the promised fertility of the land: "When the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, 'I am going to eat some meat,' because you wish to eat meat, you may eat meat whenever you have the desire" (Deut 12:20). This desire contrasts with the reality: meat was not regularly consumed except by the elite.[20] Moreover, the absence of goats from these menus is probably not accidental but, rather, reflects the fact that goats were the more-numerous, smaller animals and thus more likely to be slaughtered for food by ordinary folk.[21] Conversely, the presence in Solomon's daily fare of exotic animals is even more elitist.

The other items included both ordinary fare and special foods. Wine and legumes would have been in the former category. However, dairy products tended to be choice foods, not regularly available to all; note that the young David brought "ten cheeses" to the commander of Saul's army but only provisioned his brothers with parched grain and bread (1 Sam 17:17–18).[22] Desirable sweets appeared as dried fruit (figs and raisins) and honey: the former were pressed cakes of dried fruit, and the latter was probably date honey, which was not available throughout the land.[23] Like milk, honey was

19. Borowski (*Every Living Thing*, 57) explains why meat was not commonly part of the Israelite diet. MacDonald (*What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*," 68–72) suggests that meat-eating was *slightly* more common, especially in the Shephelah and perhaps the highlands in the Iron II period until the late eighth century, but hesitates to draw general conclusions from the relatively few sites with adequate faunal analyses. Further, an increase in animal bones can reflect drought and famine conditions; herd animals (mainly sheep and goats that were used for their milk, hair, and hides but rarely for meat) are slaughtered for food when supplies of plant food diminish. Animals are the classic stored food: "a mobile resource subject to a different set of environmental constraints than fixed fields of crops" (David C. Hopkins, "Life on the Land: The Subsistence Struggles of Early Israel," *BA* 50 [1987] 178–91 [here, p. 188]).

20. Affluence and meat are linked in Amos's warning to "those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall" (Amos 6:4).

21. As in Mesopotamia; see W. G. Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Quaegebeur; OLA 55; Leuven: Peeters, 1993) 191–201 (here, p. 197).

22. The term translated "cheese" is *ḥarîṣ ḥālāb*, literally, "slice of milk."

23. Date palms grow mainly in the Jordan Valley and along the coast; see Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel: The Evidence from Archaeology and the Bible* (Winona lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987) 127.

part of the vision of a fruitful land—land "flowing with milk and honey" (e.g., Exod 3:8; Deut 6:3; Jer 11:5)—different from the harsh reality when those ideal products of fertility were not available to all. In short, the biblical menus of royal daily fare include both elite and non-elite foods. Kings ate what others did, just more of it; and they ate special foods regularly instead of occasionally.

2. Festal Fare of Biblical Royalty

Feasts can take place within the smallest social group, the family or household, as well as the largest, the national community. Their functions are varied and numerous, for eating together binds people in social, economic, religious, and/or political relationships.[24] Festal events, for example, are instrumental in forging group identity and solidarity, and the commemorative aspects of festal occasions can affirm group values and traditions. The pleasures of community feasts can have psychological benefits, especially for groups living at the subsistence level. Feasting can also serve larger, intertwined social and political purposes. Food can be a "prime political tool," playing a "prominent role in social activities concerned with relations of power."[25] Thus royal feasting, which is a critical element in the articulation of power relationships, can be called "commensal politics."[26]

Because food and beverages are life-giving substances, they are also potent symbolic media that can be manipulated to serve political purposes. Thus the menus of royal feasts can provide information about the sociopolitical dynamics of the biblical monarchy. The books of Kings and Chronicles contain four feasting accounts in passages about the United Monarchy that include menus.[27]

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24. Brian Hayden, for example, lists nine feasting functions (not including religious) and ten varieties of feasts; see his "Fabulous Feasts: A Prolegomenon to the Importance of Feasting," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 23–64 (here, pp. 29–30, 35–36). Compare with my "Feast Days and Food Ways."

25. Michael Dietler, "Feasts and Commensal Politics in the Political Economy: Food, Power, and Status in Prehistoric Europe," in *Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (ed. Polly Wiessner and W. Schiefenhövel; Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1996) 87–126 (here, p. 87).

26. Ibid., 88. See Fu and Altmann, in this volume.

27. Two passages in 2 Chronicles, both presenting the reinstated Passover, pertain to the late monarchy. Large numbers of animals (bulls and sheep in 2 Chr 30:24; lambs, goats, and cattle in 2 Chr 35:7–9) are provided by the king (Hezekiah in the first passage, Josiah in the second) and officials. The other

In addition to the several daily menus already noted for David, one passage mentions the contents of a feast. David's rise to power, in the Chronicler's telling, includes a feast at Hebron. Not found in DtrH, it may be an expansion of 2 Sam 5:3 ("all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron . . . and they anointed David king over Israel"). David has already been ruling at Hebron, and stupendously large numbers of warriors from all the tribes (e.g., 120,000 from the Transjordanian tribes) come here "with full intent to make David king" (1 Chr 12:39[38]).[28] They bring food and drink for a pan-Israelite feast: "abundant (*lārōb*) provisions," including "meal, cakes of figs, clusters of raisins, wine, oil, oxen, and sheep, for there was joy in Israel" (1 Chr 12:41[40]). Like that of the daily fare of kings, this list includes items available to all as well as special foodstuffs, especially animal protein not often consumed by ordinary folk. Meat, as already noted, was an elite food, and the very large cattle indicated by the term *bāqār* ("oxen") were an even greater signal of wealth.[29] Although no amounts are given, the noun *rōb* typically denotes great quantities. Furthermore, factoring in the inflated numbers of tribal leaders implies astronomical amounts of food. This elaborate feast, blatantly political in establishing David as ruler of all Israel by including a group of leaders from each tribe, is marked by great quantities of food and by the presence of elite sources of animal protein.

Another passage depicts the feast—thrown by the would-be king Adonijah, one of six sons born to David at Hebron—at the end of David's reign.[30] In attempting to garner support for his ultimately futile quest to succeed his father as king, Adonijah holds "a sacrificial feast of sheep, oxen, and fatlings" (1 Kgs 1:9; NJPS) for his supporters. Other foods are not mentioned for this ritual meal, for the

foods of these celebrations may be represented by the enormous quantities of gifts and tithes placed in the temple storerooms according to 2 Chr 31:5, "first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field" in addition to sheep, cattle, and "dedicated things" (v. 6). These foodstuffs (vv. 15–19) would be allocated to priests.

28. The huge numbers of tribal warriors are a literary trope to underscore the support for David by the tribal elites; see Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 12A; New York: Doubleday, 2004) 569–71.

29. Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 85 n. 769.

30. Another feast, with no menu reported, appears (in 2 Sam 3:20) as part of the power struggle between the House of Saul and the House of David. David seems to come to terms with the Saulides at a feast he holds for Abner, Saul's first cousin and the commander of his army.

focus is on the offerings that provided meat for the accompanying feast, but other foods were surely present.[31] The animals were the finest, especially the oxen and the "fatlings" (rather than NRSV's "fatted cattle"), a somewhat obscure term probably denoting cattle that were specially fattened and thus particularly desirable to eat.[32]

The Chronicler also marks the end of David's reign by recounting the anointing of Solomon, which is marked by sacrifices and an accompanying feast organized by the aged David: "a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their libations, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel; and they ate and drank before the Lord on that day with great joy" (1 Chr 29:21–22). The mention of festal "joy" connects this feast—which terminates David's reign and inaugurates Solomon's reign—to the account of David's coronation feast (1 Chr 12:41[40]; see above).[33] Great quantities of desirable meat signify the magnitude of Davidic power as he transfers it to Solomon.

Improbable largesse appears in the long chapter about Solomon's dedication of the Jerusalem temple in 1 Kings 8. Solomon and all the assembled people sacrifice so many "sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered" (v. 5). Then Solomon himself offers "twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred twenty thousand sheep" (v. 63) in addition to "grain offerings" (v. 64). All the sacrifices were part of an enormous "festival" held "at that time" (v. 65), with portions of the sacrificial animals made available for consumption along with other unnamed comestibles. Enormous quantities of desirable animals mark this celebration.

Taken together, two features of the menus of these royal feasts are noteworthy. First, they contain the meat of choice animals, often specially fattened and thus especially delectable. Second, where specified, the numbers of animals and other provisions consumed at

31. Because many sacrifices entailed feasting, with parts of the dead animal providing food for priests and/or participants, *zbḥ* can function inclusively to mean butchering an animal and then cooking and eating parts of it—that is, to have a sacrificial meal; see Helmer Ringgren, "*zabhach*; *zebhach*," *TDOT* 4:8–17 (here, pp. 11–12). Meat is the *pars pro toto* of feasts: as the most expensive item, it represents the whole menu. See Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink," 199–200.

32. The Hebrew term is *mĕrî'*, from *mr'*, "to fatten." See Cogan, *1 Kings*, 158; cf. Borowski, *Every Living Thing*, 20, 125, 214, 215.

33. Even though this is Solomon's accession to the throne, the narrative of 1 Chronicles 29 focuses on David's accomplishments, even crediting him with a large role in the construction of the temple.

royal feasts are extraordinarily large. Only one of the festal menus lists items other than bread and meat; these items are similar to those of a king's daily fare—foods available to all, although not necessarily all the time.

3. Comparanda: Menus of Ancient Near Eastern Royalty

A look at the menus of Mesopotamian and Egyptian royalty reveals differences that may reflect divergent social structures.[34] Many features are similar to the meals of biblical kings, including the concept of the presence of the "king's table" evident in several biblical texts. Administrative accounts of food disbursements at Mari, for example, mention "the king's meal" (*naptan šarrim*), which refers to daily meals, and the "the king's table" (*paššur šarrim*), which denotes banquets or meals at official functions.[35] The menus themselves are known mainly from written evidence, for only occasional residues are recovered from palace pottery, and iconographic sources depict table vessels and an occasional haunch of meat but not the nuances of a feast.[36] The rulers apparently ate extraordinarily well both in their daily meals and at the great banquets they sponsored. They

34. Information about royal Canaanite banquets in Ugaritic texts simply stresses the abundance of meat and wine; see Lucio Milano, "Food and Diet in Pre-Classical Syria," in *Production and Consumption in the Ancient Near East*: *A Collection of Essays* (ed. C. Zaccagnini; Budapest: Chaire d'égyptologie de l'Université Eötovös Loránd de Budapest, 1989) 201–71 (here, pp. 241–42). Two of the sites considered (Mari and Emar) here are geographically Mesopotamian but would be considered culturally Syrian; so Daniel Fleming, "More Help from Syria: Introducing Emar to Biblical Study," *BA* 58 (1995) 139–47 (here, p. 142). Persian period texts also have royal "menus" but are not included here because of the focus on biblical texts that report preexilic feasts.

35. Jack M. Sasson, "The King's Table: Food and Fealty in Old Babylonian Mari," in *Food and Identity in the Ancient World* (ed. C. Grottanelli and L. Milano; History of the Ancient Near East Studies 9; Padua: Sargon, 2004) 179–215 (here, pp. 181, 208). Mari documents also mention a "queen's meal" (*naptan bēltim*) and a "great meal" (*naptanum rābum*), p. 182. They also refer to the "meal of the king and his personnel" (*naptan šarrim u ṣābim*); see Milano, "Food and Diet in Pre-Classical Syria," 215.

36. See Dominique Collon, "Banquets in the Art of the Ancient Near East," in *Banquets d'Orient* (ed. R. Gyselin; Res Orientales 4; Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'Étude de la Civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1992) 23–29. An overview of the written sources appears in Jean Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World: Cooking in Mesopotamia* (trans. T. L. Fagan; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 14–35.

dined mainly on indigenous foodstuffs that were transformed into comestibles in a great variety of ways.[37]

The texts discovered in the palace of Zimri-Lim (reigned 1775–1761 B.C.E.) at Mari indicate that prodigious amounts of animal protein from domestic animals, game, eels, fish, and poultry were served at his table.[38] The grain products are also noteworthy. The breads and cakes were made of a prized kind of wheat (*burrum*) rather than the barley used for the breads of ordinary folk, including the palace servants.[39] Moreover, the variety of baked goods was considerable, with different kinds of flour, fats, liquids, fruit, and spices combined in various ways to produce a sizable assortment.[40] Furthermore, the kitchen at Mari was supplied with "a great number of pots of different shapes and sizes," attesting elaborate culinary techniques.[41] As for drink, wine was not available locally at Mari and thus was an elite beverage. Considerable quantities, varied menus, complex preparations, and choice foods were further enhanced by presentation, which is evident in the astonishingly diverse terra-cotta culinary molds and decorated platters discovered in the palace. The molds were used for shaping dishes; and, "more than any other discovery in the palace, these kitchen moulds display a taste for refinement and luxury."[42] Both menu and presentation signify an elevated culinary culture.

Perhaps the most important source of information about Mesopotamian menus is a set of three culinary tablets from the Old Babylonian period (ca. 1700 B.C.E.). Together, they contain 35 recipes, each listing ingredients and prescribing the manner of preparation.[43] Several features provide important insights into the culinary culture of Mesopotamia in the early second millennium and probably throughout Mesopotamian antiquity.[44] One is the large number of ingredi-

37. Idem, *Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) 45–46.

38. Sasson, "The King's Table," 206–8.

39. Milano, "Food and Diet," 217.

40. Ibid., 220.

41. See Sasson, "The King's Table," 192.

42. Stephanie Dalley, *Mari and Karana: Two Old Babylonian Cities* (London: Longman, 1984) 88.

43. See Jean Bottéro, *Textes culinaires Mésopotamiens* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 6; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995); idem, "The Most Ancient Recipes of All," in *Food in Antiquity* (ed. J. Wilkins, D. Harvey, and M. Dobson; Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995) 248–55.

44. Bottéro (*Textes culinaires*, 21) notes that two texts—one predating the Old Babylonian period and one over a millennium later—contain information about

ents, including the many flavoring agents or condiments; all together, some 40 different additives are mentioned, with at least 3 or 4 and up to 12 in a single dish.[45] Moreover, these flavoring ingredients typically appear in pairs, attesting an awareness that certain seasonings are complementary.[46] Also, directions are given for the presentation of the dishes and the garnishes to be used so that the food would be both highly delectable and visually pleasing.[47] The recipes evince "the kind of finesse that characterizes *grande cuisine* and gastronomy," food available only to royalty and deities.[48] This elaborate cuisine required chefs who had mastered complex techniques and also an assortment of kitchen vessels and installations.[49] Master chefs and elaborate equipment further indicate that the recipes were for the highest echelons of a hierarchical society.

The Late Bronze Age texts from Emar reveal the kinds and amounts of foodstuffs specified for ritual events, not royal feasts.[50] However, the foods presented to the deities "correspond to the meals of mortals."[51] Thus, the ritual feasting pattern represents the differentiated meals of the city's elites. Barley bread and its by-product, beer, were the mainstays of the daily diet and were central to ritual meals. Ritual meals, however, included special cuts of meat—mainly sheep and the more valuable oxen, rarely the commonplace goats. Furthermore, diverse forms of bread, sometimes with the addition of fruit, are mentioned. Fruit and wine, not found in ordinary meals, were also offered to the gods and then consumed by the elites. However, aromatic substances rarely appear. The general picture is that elite meals featured the mainstays of ordinary Emar folks' diet as well as certain special foods and drinks. The variety of breads also marks the ritual feasts as different from daily

food preparation and preferences that is remarkably similar to the procedures and ingredients in the Old Babylonian recipes. Thus one can speak of an elite "Mesopotamian cuisine" spanning millennia.

45. See ibid., 18, and the chart on p. 161.

46. Ibid., 19.

47. Ibid., 19–20.

48. Idem, *Food in Antiquity*, 253–54.

49. Idem, *Everyday Life*, 62–63.

50. For details of the ritual meals, see Walther Sallaberger, "Home-Made Bread, Municipal Mutton, Royal Wine: Establishing Social Relations during the Preparation and Consumption of Food in Religious Festivals at Late Bronze Age Emar," *eTopoi Journal for Ancient Studies* Special Volume 2 (*Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces*; 2012) 151–71 (here, pp. 159–63).

51. Ibid., 160.

repasts, yet the absence of spices suggests that the prepared foods were not culinarily complex.

Another major source of information about Mesopotamian cuisine is the oft-cited "Banquet Stele," which provides details of a ninth-century B.C.E. feast involving astronomical numbers of both guests and victuals. To celebrate renovations at Nimrud, Ashurnasirpal II throws a ten-day-long party for 69,574 people. The supplies for the feast include a fabulous array of rare and exotic foods along with numerous seasoning ingredients.[52] The sources of animal protein included 29,200 domestic animals (cows, oxen, calves, sheep, spring lambs—most specially fed), 1,000 game animals (gazelles and stags), 34,000 birds (ducks, geese, doves, and several unidentified species), 10,000 fish of various kinds, and 10,000 jerboa (desert rats; or perhaps locusts), in addition to 10,000 eggs. These victuals were accompanied by 10,000 loaves of bread, 10,000 containers each of beer and wine, and 100 containers of mixed beers. Tens, hundreds, and sometimes thousands of containers held additional supplies: various spices and condiments, fruits, nuts, seeds, roasted barley, cheeses, honey, milk, olives, and pickled grains.

The variety of animal protein of course is stunning, but so too is the assortment of condiments and other foodstuffs—most not readily available to ordinary folk—used to prepare elaborate dishes. A sizable staff—butchers, cooks, pastry chefs, stewards, servers, and numerous others to perform the sundry menial tasks associated with preparing huge quantities of food—is implied.[53] Thus the Nimrud inventory, like the recipe texts, testifies to a *grand cuisine* available only at the king's table. The historicity of the huge numbers, especially of animals, may be in doubt; but their function in displaying the royal power through both quantity and quality is quite clear.

Information about royal Egyptian meals, which is based mainly on archaeological and iconographic sources—foodstuffs recovered from tombs and tomb paintings portraying the deceased seated at a meal—is similar. Lists of tomb offerings include 10 kinds of meat and 5 of birds, 16 different breads and cakes, 6 types of wine and

52. A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC*, vol. 1: *(1114–859 BC)* (RIMA: Assyrian Periods 2; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 292–93.

53. The size of the staff would also have been astronomical, of course. For comparison: see a document from the late Neo-Assyrian period that lists 220 cupbearers, 400 cooks, and 400 pastry chefs, among others, as the staff of the queen's house in Nineveh (Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine*, 81).

4 of beer, 11 varieties of fruit, and many sweets.[54] The best archaeological evidence comes from a tomb at Sakkara, where analysis of the remains of a funerary feast revealed the menu: several grain dishes (one sweetened with honey), fish, quail, several beef dishes, stewed figs, fresh berries, cheese, and wine.[55] Wine, honey, and beef were foods available only to the wealthy, as was the variety of other animal proteins and of baked goods.[56] Similar, even more-elaborate repasts are depicted on tomb paintings of the Eighteenth Dynasty.[57] One significant feature is the staggering variety of baked goods. Loaves of bread varied in size, shape, texture (depending on the kind and grade of flour used), flavorings (such as coriander seeds and dates), and decoration—with some formed into geometric shapes and others made in the shape of animals or even people.[58]

This information indicates that elite meals included foodstuffs unavailable to most people and also featured elaborations and refinements that could be achieved only by a staff of culinary experts using an assortment of special equipment, including baking molds.[59] Fanciful shapes do not enhance the taste of the breads; rather, they signify the concern for presentation typical of a refined culinary culture. The Joseph narrative in Genesis has similar information. When Joseph is imprisoned with the Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and

54. Adolf Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (trans. H. M. Tirard; New York: Dover, 1971) 188.

55. Reported in Walter B. Emery, *A Funerary Repast in an Egyptian Tomb of the Archaic Period* (Leiden: Nederlands Istituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1962). A later tomb (ca. 1400 B.C.E.) included even more varied foodstuffs; see Edda Bresciani, *Food and Drink: Life Resources in Ancient Egypt* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1997) 9.

56. See Salima Ikram, "Diet," *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (ed. Donald B. Redford), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195102345.001.0001/acref-9780195102345-e-0186?rskey=Lvd98o&result=186 [accessed 7 February 2014].

57. Idem, "Banquets," *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (ed. Donald B. Redford), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195102345.001.0001/acref-9780195102345-e-0080?rskey=yxpYZw&result=80&print [accessed 7 February 2014].

58. Delwyn Samuel, "Bread," *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* 1:196–98 (here, p. 198). A scene from the court bakery of Ramesses III shows many kinds of loaves in the palace bakery (p. 197).

59. In addition to kitchens, the royal court has its own bakery with a variety of personnel, including "preparers of sweets"; so Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 187–88. Moreover, the kitchen staff was "complex and hierarchical" and included brewers, bakers, butchers, pastry chefs, sommeliers (cup-bearers), and others (Bresciani, *Food and Drink*, 14–15).

baker, both positions associated with elite meals, he interprets their dreams. The chief baker's dream includes containers holding "all sorts of baked food for the Pharaoh" (Gen 40:16–17). This great variety of baked goods characterizes the palatial cuisine of ancient Egypt.

The records of royal repasts in Mesopotamia and Egypt emphasize abundance (although this is not clear for Emar). In addition, the presence of myriad ingredients signals a refined cuisine (although less so at Emar). The discovery of molds for the preparation and presentation of baked goods and other foods (but not at Emar) likewise suggests the presence of haute cuisine, the hallmark of which is careful presentation as well as the meticulous preparation of complex dishes.[60]

4. Discussion: Biblical Royal Repasts and Social Class

Royal Israelite repasts, especially the feasts associated with the period of the United Monarchy, can be interrogated, using the work of social scientists, for information about sociopolitical hierarchies in biblical Israel. Anthropologists have studied the political-symbolic attributes of feasts, showing how feasts can be ploys for obtaining, maintaining, or strengthening political or social power (or both). Especially relevant to this project is the fact that menus of these feasts have a subtext that highlights differences of rank and status.[61] The feasts of biblical kings show elements of three patterns of commensal politics—*empowering*, *patron-role*, and *diacritical* feasts—in which the wealth and generosity of the host are signaled by the festal menus (among other features).[62]

Elements of the empowerment feast appear in the narrative of the would-be king Adonijah, who hopes that his generosity will gain

60. See n. 68.

61. See Martin Jones, *Feast: Why Humans Share Foods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 149–50.

62. These feasting patterns and their dynamics are presented by Michael Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast, Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics, and Power in African Contexts," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 65–114 (here, pp. 75–88); and idem, "Feasts and Commensal Politics," 92–99. See also Hayden ("Fabulous Feasts," 35–40) for a slightly different presentation of feasting types.

the support of his guests.[63] Aspects of the patron-role feast, which symbolically reiterates asymmetrical power relations, are found in the Chronicler's account of David's becoming king of all Israel; the festal foods honor the authority of the king, thereby formalizing the close but unequal relationship between him and his warriors.[64] Features of both of these patterns appear in passages reporting the feast that David gives at the anointing of Solomon and the feast that Solomon gives at the dedication of the temple. In both empowerment and patron-role feasts, the communicative dimension of the repast is typically expressed in the considerable quantities of food and drink as well as the presence of at least some foodstuffs not readily available to all.

The third feasting pattern takes royal repasts to another level. In the diacritical feast, large quantities of sumptuous comestibles symbolize the supreme status of the host. Its menus feature an even greater variety of foodstuffs (including rare foods) than the other two patterns do. Culinary complexity and elaborate presentation further characterize these feasts. In other words, diacritical feasts feature haute cuisine. Exotic foods and drinks prepared and served in highly distinctive ways are visual displays of the immense power and wealth of the regime. The royal feasts of Mari, Nimrud, and Egypt (but not Emar) clearly fit this pattern.[65]

Some elements of diacritical feasts appear in the festal meals of biblical royalty. Large quantities of food are mentioned in several royal repasts; and meat, especially from the finest animals, is the prestige food par excellence and appears in all the menus.[66] But these elements are also present in the other two patterns, and the truly distinctive features of diacritical feasts are absent: neither exotic foods nor complex dishes are mentioned, and there is no reference to a great diversity of baked goods or the use of spices and seasonings. In short, biblical texts do not present an Israelite haute cuisine, and this arguably indicates a lack of highly developed

63. See MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone*, 158. MacDonald relates this feast and several other feasts considered above to attempts to consolidate power at the time of the emerging monarchy.

64. The daily meals of Solomon in 1 Kings 5[4] also exhibit the dynamics of the patron-role feast.

65. Jack Goody (*Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study of Comparative Sociology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982] 99–103) includes Egypt in his discussion of high cuisines of the ancient world.

66. However, the extreme numbers listed for Solomon's daily meals surely engage a trope of excess to denote Solomonic might.

class differentiation.[67] Surely Israelite society was less stratified than Egypt or the large Mesopotamian cities.[68]

Cross-cultural studies of feasting patterns bear this out, for they strongly suggest that, the more differentiated the menu, the more hierarchical the society.[69] The cultures with the most refined cuisine typically exhibit the greatest degree of sociopolitical complexity. Diacritical feasts characterized by haute cuisine manipulate and emphasize social or political distance by using highly differentiated cooking practices to set apart the ruler with the resources to provide exotic dishes from everyone else.

In societies with fewer sociopolitical differences, more and better meat rather than varied foods characterizes the festal menus of rulers. In other words, members of the ruling class in moderately stratified societies tend to eat the same foods as others, albeit more of the foods and more often. The daily menus of biblical kings as well as their festal meals follow this pattern. The most prestigious food, meat, was regularly consumed by royalty yet available to average folk only on special occasions; and other elite foods on the royal table were occasionally available—seasonally or at festivals—to most others. The cuisine of biblical kings was basically domestic, with greater quantities and more variety, but without complex dishes. When kings and peasants have a somewhat similar culinary culture, they are socially less distant from each other than in highly stratified societies.

A related factor is that elite meals based on domestic cuisines tend to be prepared by women, whereas the highly differentiated foods of hautes cuisines are the work of many professionals, mainly men.[70] The differentiated cuisines of Egypt and Mesopotamia were prepared by such professionals (such as the chief cupbearer and

67. The one exception, not mentioned above because no menu is included, is the highly stylized report (probably inserted later) of the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon. Her reference to "the fare of his table, the seating of his courtiers, the service and attire of his attendants, and his wine service" (1 Kgs 10:9) is a description of elaborate service—a feature of diacritical feasts that is not mentioned elsewhere. Note also that the Passover feasts described by the Chronicler (see n. 27) also lack the exotic foods of haute cuisine.

68. Emar, however, evinces a pattern more like the biblical pattern: it lacks features of haute cuisine. This may be expected for a relatively small city: its king had limited power, and its sociopolitical hierarchies were less pronounced (see Fleming, "More Help from Syria," 143, 146).

69. See Goody's *Cooking Cuisine and Class*.

70. Mennell, Murcott, and Otterloo, *Sociology of Food*, 22.

baker whom Joseph meets in the Egyptian prison) but apparently not in biblical Israel. Note the female gender of the cooks and bakers who, in Samuel's warning, will be drafted for work in the royal palace (1 Sam 8:13). Moreover, even royal women were not completely removed from food preparation activities. David's son Amnon does not hesitate to ask his father to have his sister Tamar prepare special baked goods for him, which she does (2 Sam 13:5–9). A royal princess is depicted as having knowledge of the technology of baking, which is typically passed down from mother to daughter.[71] Royal women in the palaces of Egypt and the enormous urban cities of Mesopotamia arguably lacked this hands-on familiarity with food-preparation techniques.

In conclusion, the feasts depicted for biblical royalty in the period of the United Monarchy may well have been sites of commensal politics; their lavish amounts and rich meats set the royal figure apart from others in order to gain, maintain, or consolidate power. However, their culinary culture was relatively simple, especially in comparison with the haute cuisine of the superpowers of the ancient Near East. Samuel's warning bears repeating—that the kings would take the *best* of the crops. The daily and festal meals of the palace thus involved the same basic foods—albeit of higher quality and more-regular availability—as the meals of ordinary folk. Royal meals were the subtext that not only set royalty apart but also connected kings and courtiers with the rest of the people. The biblical menus of the royal feasts of Israel's earliest kings are consonant with moderate stratification and may be suggestive of the sociopolitical reality of ancient Israel.

71. Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) 136–37.

Feast and Famine: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives on Lack as a Backdrop for Plenty in the Hebrew Bible

Peter Altmann

Brian Murton begins his entry on famine in *The Cambridge World History of Food* by stating, "The term 'famine' is one of the most powerful, pervasive, and (arguably) emotive words in our historical vocabulary."[1] Famine represents a stinging defeat in the unending human search for daily sustenance that is never at a great remove in human reality. This constant struggle was, of course, quite pronounced in the ancient world. Surprisingly, then, no book-length investigation of the theme of food shortage exists for ancient Israel, the Hebrew Bible, or much of the broader ancient Near East.[2] This

1. Brian Murton, "Famine," *The Cambridge World History of Food* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 1411–26 (here, p. 1411).

2. Some discussion has arisen on hunger and famine in ancient Egypt, however, which I will include below. Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) does offer a comparable work on classical antiquity. Only one scholarly essay directly addresses the topic of hunger in the Hebrew Bible: Jürgen Kegler, "Hunger," in *Essen und Trinken in der Bibel: Ein literarisches Festmahl für Rainer Kessler zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. M. Geiger, C. M. Maier, and U. Schmidt; Gütersloh: Gütersloher-Verlag, 2009) 319–29. Kegler's study is quite insightful and raises some points similar to mine. Nathan MacDonald provides a short discussion in *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008) 57–60; L. Juliana M. Claassens, *The God Who Provides: Biblical Images of Divine Nourishment* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004) also has one chapter on the subject. The meager earlier works usually focus—for some legitimate reasons—on using biblical texts to allay modern world hunger, including Walter J. Harrelson, "Famine in the Perspective of Biblical Judgments and Promises," *Soundings* 59 (1976) 84–99; Ted Peters, "Messianic Banquet and World Hunger," *Religion in Life* 47 (1978) 497–508; Bruce C. Birch, "Hunger, Poverty and Biblical Religion," *Christian Century* 92 (1975) 593–99. Gary A. Anderson (*Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel: Studies in Their Social and Political Importance* [HSM 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987] 106–23), however, offers a comparison with other ancient Near Eastern

lack of scholarly works certainly does not reflect the ever-ready provision of foodstuffs in the ancient Levant. The topic also appears quite frequently in the biblical texts.

In this essay, I take a step toward addressing this desideratum.[3] My intention is to tease out some of the "obvious" and (perhaps for this reason) often unarticulated relationships between feasting and food shortage. Or in the language of biblical texts, I posit a close connection between "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt 6:11) and "enjoy all the good that Yahweh your God has granted you" (Deut 26:11). The former articulates the basic fear of a lack of food and the basic desire for food, while the second celebrates its plentiful fulfillment. There is a tension in the dialectic between food shortage and food abundance that implies the importance of the two poles for understanding the meaning of each.

I will proceed by addressing the following: (1) What parameters for interpreting the appearance of shortages in ancient texts does research into food shortage in the modern world provide? (2) What insights can be gained from an archaeological analysis of the remains of humans as well as the texts and iconography of the surrounding cultures regarding food-supply issues in the ancient Levant? (3) How are the dynamics surrounding the causes and effects of food shortage depicted in the texts of the Hebrew Bible? Finally, (4) what are the implications of food shortage and famine for feasting and the experience of plenty in the biblical texts?

1. Human Biological Parameters: Theoretical Remarks on Food Shortages and Famines—Definitions and Physiology

Famine is a term with many definitions. Until recently, modern scholarship viewed it as a natural hazard; however, various authorities have since proposed some of the following meanings for *famine*: less than one square meal per day, a crop failure, severe malnutri-

polities. Otherwise, one finds short overviews in reference works: e.g., Laurent Coulon, "Famine," *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (ed. E. Frood and W. Wendrich; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), http://escholarship.org/ [accessed 13 July 2012]; Andreas Michel, "Hunger/Hungersnot (AT)," WiBiLex, http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de [accessed 4 June 2012]; T. Seidl, "רָעֵב," *TWAT* 7:555–66.

3. I hope to address the topic at greater length in the future.

tion, or a word synonymous with starvation.[4] The possibilities are evidence that the subject is more complicated than one might originally have assumed. Famine can best be understood as a continuum of increasing severity, ranging from hunger to undernutrition, to malnutrition, and finally to famine proper. W. Dando proposes the following definition for *famine proper*: "a protracted total shortage of food in a restricted geographical area, causing widespread disease and death from starvation."[5] This definition, which I will adopt, highlights duration, specific location, and raised mortality.[6] It is thus different from a general state of hunger, or even a generally hungry time of year, when last year's food has run out, and before the next harvest. The notions of "protracted" and "total" shortage also indicate social breakdown, a characteristic discussed below.

A second theoretical issue is the specific relationship between agricultural production/failure and food provision/shortage. I find it problematic to assume a direct causal link between crop failure and famine: famine is not simply the result of too little food being available to eat in a given locality. There could be—and often has been—enough to eat in a given region, but a famine still occurs because famine implies that *some* people do not have sufficient food, while others may have plenty.[7] A. Sen concludes that famines *often* occur without any change in overall regional production, suggesting that famine is first and foremost a distributional issue. For example, he notes, "The Ethiopian famine took place with no abnormal reduction in food output, and consumption of food per head at the height of the famine in 1973 was fairly normal for Ethiopia as a whole."[8] Further elaborations on Sen's conclusion note that famines take place as a result of longer-term structural (political) issues combined

4. See William A. Dando, "Famine," in *Food and Famine in the 21st Century*, vol. 1: *Topics and Issues* (ed. W. A. Dando; Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012) 139–48 (here, p. 142); cf. Murton, "Famine"; David Arnold, *Famine: Social Crisis and Historical Change* (New Perspectives on the Past; Oxford: Blackwell, 1988) 5–28.

5. Dando, "Famine," 142.

6. Peter Garnsey (*Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988] 6) offers a similar definition: "A famine is when food is in such short supply that it results in . . . starvation and a substantially increased mortality rate in a community or region."

7. Amartya Kumar Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981) 43.

8. Ibid., 111.

with immediate causes, climatic or otherwise, leading to the event itself.[9] Nonetheless, the point I wish to highlight here is simply that food security and scarcity are not only a matter of food production: an adequate explanation requires the inclusion of political variables.

In addition to providing a more robust definition of the concept of famine, modern studies of hunger and famine provide insight into the physiological effects of food shortages.[10] Experiments conducted in clinical contexts have been carried out to observe the physiological and psychological effects of food deprivation, the most well known being the "Minnesota Starvation Study." In this study during World War II, 26 men underwent a year-long regimen of controlled caloric intake, which for 24 weeks was at "semi-starvation levels."[11] The psychological effects experienced by the men included a preoccupation with food, preference for isolation, and reduction in the ability to comprehend. Some of the physical effects were dry skin, a decline in fertility, and edema (swelling) in the extremities and stomach from fluid accumulations, along with the expected apathy and increased rates of disease.

Other studies of modern populations show that undernourishment often results in vitamin A, vitamin C, and iron deficiencies. These deficiencies lead to night blindness, beriberi, pellagra, scurvy, rickets, and anemia, among other problems.[12] Furthermore, food shortages traditionally lead non-elite populations to turn to substitute or "famine foods":

> Accustomed to the economies of consumption forced upon them by the annual 'hunger gap', peasants responded to advancing famine by reducing the amount of food consumed at each meal and by spacing meals out over longer and longer intervals. . . . To eke out food supplies, peasants began to add other ingredients, some familiar from the seasonal times of hunger, others indicative of the increasingly desperate attempt to stave off gnawing hunger. In Russia in the late nineteenth century peasants

9. Arnold, *Famine*, 6.

10. William A. Dando, "Hunger and Starvation," in *Food and Famine in the 21st Century*, vol. 1: *Topics and Issues* (ed. W. A. Dando; Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012) 269–77; Dando, "Famine."

11. Meaning that they received approximately half the number of calories they had received during the control period (1560 vs. 3200 calories/day); cf. Dando, "Hunger and Starvation," 276. Kegler ("Hunger," 321–22) also notes this study.

12. For details on these diseases, see Donald J. Zeigler, "Deficiency Diseases," in *Food and Famine in the 21st Century*, vol. 1: *Topics and Issues* (ed. W. A. Dando; Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012) 103–10; MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* 80–87.

> made 'famine bread', mixing with a little rye a plant known as 'goosefoot' that grew wild in the fields even when sown crops failed. . . . Its continued use brought on headaches, vomiting and diarrhea.[13]

This example of the use of "goosefoot" shows that consumption of materials as diverse as grass, earth, wild plants, and bark—all documented during extreme circumstances—have negative physiological and social repercussions of their own. Famished populations were well aware that such foods were less suited to human consumption, but eating these items was an adaptive strategy that was something of a "lesser evil." Such physical (not to mention emotional, social, and political) consequences also deserve consideration in discussions on famine.

In conclusion, famine is a significantly more complicated phenomenon than a chance event caused by a natural disaster. It has structural components, in terms of both causes and effects, that are deeply embedded in a society's political structure. Furthermore, famine itself stands at the end of a continuum of levels of food shortage that have diverse and detrimental effects on human physiology, psychology, and societal functioning. The following sections of this essay show how these dynamics also played out in ancient contexts.

2. Food Provisioning and Shortage in the Ancient World

In this section, I intend to give a broad overview of the dynamics involved in ancient food shortage in order to provide an important context for the appearances of hunger and famine in the biblical texts. I begin by recounting the little available evidence on the *actual* diet of everyday people in relation to the extremely limited paleopathological data on malnutrition in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East.[14] The second subsection synthesizes comparative data from Classical and Late Antiquity. And finally, I turn to literary texts and iconography from the ancient Near East, which record the provision of plenty by rulers—both human and divine—in contrast to the shortages undergone by liminal groups and enemies, thereby emphasizing the importance of politics for food provision.

13. Arnold, *Famine*, 78–79. Arnold provides examples from 1931 Niger, 1877 Brazil, Ireland's Great Hunger, India, and China.

14. For the most detailed statement on the various Israelite diets, see MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?*

A. Levantine Diet and Paleopathological Summary

A look at the "Israelite diet" provides an important building block for this discussion. The basic food options named, for example, in Deut 8:8 (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olive [oil], and honey) and on display throughout the Hebrew Bible and archaeological surveys need not, in themselves, imply much in the way of food shortage or vitamin deficiency. While biblical texts rarely mention lentils due to their low status, archaeological finds, for instance, support their frequent consumption, making up for a shortfall in the amount of protein available, due to the relatively rare intake of meat.[15] This first glance at the situation in ancient Israel seems to bode well, even when Israel is compared with some of its neighbors. Although there is limited evidence available, some ration texts from Mesopotamia provide a comparison. They consist of barley to an overwhelming extent (which could hamper iron and zinc intake with overuse, not to mention giving rise to vitamin A and seasonal vitamin C deficiencies).[16] Conversely, the "biblical" diet seems to cover the human body's needs quite sufficiently due to its diversity.

However, simply naming the ingredients on offer in a geographical region (and the ancient Levant contains several climatic or environmental zones) does not ensure accuracy regarding adequate nutrition for its human inhabitants, as the discussion above has shown. Iron and vitamin A deficiencies might have resulted from the inadequate intake of meat, lentils, or leafy green vegetables. Inadequate vitamin C could arise from not eating enough fruit and vegetables. Leafy green vegetables would have been hard to grow in the Israelite-Judahite highlands, as well as the eastern and southern desert regions, given the large amount of water necessary for these foods to grow.[17] Inhabitants with lower status also received less

15. Peter Altmann, "Diet, Bronze and Iron Age," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Archaeology* (ed. D. Master; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) 286–96; Carol L. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) 53. Meyers cites several comparable ethnographic studies from the Aegean and modern Palestine to support these conclusions.

16. Rosemary Ellison, "Diet in Mesopotamia: The Evidence of the Barley Ration Texts (c. 3000–1400 B.C.)," *Iraq* 43 (1981) 35–45; idem, "Some Thoughts on the Diet of Mesopotamia from c. 3000–600 B.C.," *Iraq* 45 (1983) 146–50.

17. There are implications here for Ahab's desire to turn Naboth's vineyard into a vegetable patch in 1 Kgs 21:2: "Ahab said to Naboth, 'Give me your vineyard, so that I may have it for a vegetable garden [*gan-yārōq*, literally, "green garden"], because it is near my house'" (NRSV).

meat, making iron, zinc, and vitamin A harder to come by, depending on the intake of lentils.

MacDonald draws together the few available sources published prior to 2008 and compares them with the classical material.[18] He relies on the seventh-century B.C.E. remains near Jerusalem of 60 skeletons and remains from Persian period Tel Michal (just north of Tel Aviv), Tell el-Mazar (Jordan), Tell ʿIra (Beer-sheva valley), and Achzib (north of Akko). Of these, only the Jerusalem and Tell ʿIra data can readily be associated with the societies depicted in biblical texts. The strong Phoenician presence on the Palestinian coast in the Persian period, where Tel Michal is located, contrasts sharply with tiny, poor, sparsely inhabited Yehud. Tell el-Mazar and Achzib also fall outside "Israel" and "Judah." However, the lack of any other significant data necessitates the inclusion of data from these sites in order to provide a fuller data set. In any case, the Jerusalem data suggest iron deficiency, yet exactly how this relates to nutrition is difficult to establish.[19] The evidence from Tell ʿIra, made up of examinations of pre-death wear on teeth, also indicates reliance on low-quality flour that ruined teeth.

Thus, MacDonald sums up the paltry data appropriately: "Iron Age Israel was no different from earlier and later periods in exhibiting a high level of pathologies that relate to poor nutritional status and acute infection. . . . [T]he health of the population was far from good."[20] One may perhaps go even further and, following C. Meyers, conclude that the Iron Age population was worse off than their Bronze Age ancestors.[21] If this is the case, then malnutrition made

18. There simply has been little work done in paleopathology in the Levant. See, e.g., Casparus Johannes Greef (*Paleopathology: Signs and Lesions in Skeletal Remains of Epidemics and Diseases of Biblical Times in Syro-Palestine* [Ph.D. diss., University of South Africa, 2009] 176), who laments the lack of paleopathological analysis in Syria–Palestine during the first millennium B.C.E.; cf. MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* 80–87.

19. This is surmised from the porotic hyperostosis and cribra orbitalia of skull bones, which could arise from iron deficiency. This deficiency itself could result from insufficient iron intake, high grain intake, which reduces the body's ability to absorb iron, or the body's attempt to fight off diseases that need iron by reducing the amount of iron available; cf. Zeigler, "Deficiency Diseases"; Hugh Garnet McKenzie, *Skeletal Evidence for Health and Disease at Bronze Age Tell Leilan, Syria* (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1999) 44.

20. MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat?* 85–86.

21. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 99 and n. 38, where she follows the analysis of M. Giles ("The Human and Animals Remains," in *Lachish IV: The Bronze Age* [London: Oxford University Press, 1958] appendix B, pp. 318–22 [here, p. 318])

for an ever-more-exacerbated problem at the time when the biblical texts containing the motif of food shortage began to take shape.

B. Classical and Postclassical Food Shortage

Given the shortage of evidence available from the ancient Levant, the comparable plethora from Classical Antiquity and Late Antique Byzantium can fill out the picture significantly. A synthesis of this material has been provided by P. Garnsey for Classical Antiquity and D. Stathakopoulos for Late Antique Byzantium. Although the data covered by these scholars come from regions beyond the Levant proper and in the case of Byzantium from a later period, they do address locations on the Mediterranean with similar climates and with considerably more data. Thus, although impressionistic, some important background for interpreting the biblical and ancient Near Eastern depictions can emerge.

In his comparable study of Greco-Roman antiquity, Garnsey adopts a similar conception of *famine*, arguing "that famines were rare and that food crises less serious than famines, . . . food shortages, were common."[22] This conclusion shows that Garnsey relies on a differentiated conception of famine, food crisis, and food shortage. In fact, he finds evidence for only four full-blown famines in Athens from the fifth to first centuries B.C.E.[23] Although roughly one famine per century means that not every generation experienced deprivation on this scale, several political factors imply that there was endemic vulnerability to food shortage: unless a polity could dominate other communities and rely on a stable government, food shortage was constantly a menacing specter on the horizon.[24] For

that "[d]ata from a number of Palestinian sites suggest that life expectancies were shortest in the Iron Age." How the data from this site may compare with other sites in the region is an open question, but I am hesitant to claim too much on the basis of this single site.

22. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply*, xi. He continues with a note on Athens and Rome:

> Among ancient states, Athens and Rome deviate from the general practice of minimal government intervention in the provision of access to food supplies. But this was not the case at all times. Athens only built up an impressive structure of laws and institutions to secure the food supply in the fourth century BC, while Rome developed a regular food supply system from the turn of the third century BC and operated monthly distributions of grain from 123 BC; the grain was not handed out gratis to most citizens until 58 BC.

23. Ibid., 7.

24. Ibid., 16.

example, most dire situations in Athens occurred after the time of the Athenian empire, during Macedonian dominance—that is, when Athens was no longer the political center it had previously been.

Ancient Mediterranean cities did not generally develop political institutions for protecting the ordinary population from food crises.[25] In the Greek world, this meant that the responsibility of making up for a shortage in food provisions fell in large part to the wealthy individuals of societies, thereby enhancing the importance of patronage and *euergetism* (public generosity of the wealthy). Generally speaking, grain was not kept for more than two years by small landholders: the grain would deteriorate, and owners had limited storage facilities.[26] The lack of longer-term reserves made informal patronage networks essential. In fact, as Garnsey notes, "Government action characteristically took the form of putting pressure on wealthy individuals to undertake services and make benefactions for the community."[27] As I will show below, the expectations of the ruling authorities appear to have been different in the ancient Near Eastern royal presentations and in the biblical material, where the monarch was expected to play a central role in the alleviation of shortage.

The nature of food shortages and famine in Stathakopoulos's study of Late Antiquity also fosters understanding of the biblical material. Inflicting food shortage on a society could be conceived as a conscious instrument of war, rather than merely a side effect. For instance, extant manuals detail how to destroy crops and poison water reservoirs.[28]

Significantly, the nexus between famine, war, and pestilence—a theme that is prominent in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel—takes on new contours. When military invasions took place, a considerable swath of the population fled to fortified cities.[29] The increased

25. Imperial Rome is a fairly unique counterexample; see ibid., xi, 217.

26. Ibid., 54. Stockpiles of more than a year's worth of grain were kept in ancient Israel, as is clearly manifest by the size and number of recovered storage jars and by the grain silos. See Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 56.

27. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply*, 86. See Prov 11:26.

28. Dionysios C. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire: A Systematic Survey of Subsistence Crises and Epidemics* (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monograph 9; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) 45.

29. See, for the ancient Levant and Israel, Israel Ephʿal, *The City Besieged: Siege and Its Manifestations in the Ancient Near East* (CHANE 36; Leiden: Brill, 2009) 66, with reference to EA 244:30–32. On the similar population growth in Jerusalem, see, e.g., Baruch Halpern, "Jerusalem and the Lineages in the

population density, compounded by the accompanying weakened physique and poor hygiene would facilitate the outbreak of disease.

> Populations confined within the limited space of city walls experienced a gradual decline of victuals. . . . Conditions of overcrowding were also present in other cases where starvation set in. These were caused by the migration of large numbers of rural populations to urban centres in search of food during severe famines. . . . Most instances of mortality connected to famine, however, involve the presence of epidemic diseases as well.[30]

The Late Antique evidence also suggests that, while people rarely died of starvation, when they did it took place in cities under siege. Much more common, however, was death by diseases resulting from dietary shortage. These deaths, whether from starvation or disease, indicate the type of attrition that could be expected from siege warfare. In addition to the triad of sword, food shortage, and disease, the above quotation refers to the potential for migration to urban centers under conditions of food scarcity; a similar development appears in Genesis 12, 20, 41–47—chapters that depict each generation of ancestors (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's sons) traveling to foreign centers as a result of food scarcity.[31]

Second, Stathakopoulos's evidence attributes the greater portion of food shortages to drought.[32] This analysis correlates with reports from rabbinic literature, about which Garnsey notes, "[D]rought is referred to in Rabbinic literature from the second to the fourth century so frequently that one can be misled into believing that rainfall was abnormally low in the period in question."[33] This second category, natural shortages, coincides with the many biblical texts that simply state that shortages occurred, without noting any military or political action. Instead, they report adverse weather, usually drought; for example, 1 Kings 18 depicts a three-year-long drought.

Seventh Century BCE: Kinship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability," in *Law and Ideology in Monarchic Israel* (ed. B. Halpern and D. W. Hobson; JSOTSup 124; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 11–107 (here, p. 48).

30. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, 156.

31. Kegler ("Hunger," 320–21) concludes from this biblical material that the experience probably took place in every period of ancient Israelite history. He also insightfully points out the vulnerability of these migrants, especially in a foreign land.

32. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, 37.

33. Garnsey (*Famine and Food Supply*, 15) references *b. Taʿan.* 25a; see also Daniel Sperber ("Drought, Famine and Pestilence in Amoraic Palestine," *JESHO* 17 [1974] 272–98), who discusses, among other references: *t. Soṭah* 15.2; *y. Taʿan.* 3.4, 11; *b. Taʿan.* 23a; and *Lev. Rab.* 4:14.

Yet even in the case of drought-influenced shortages, Stathakopoulos notes, "Subsistence crises were rarely uni-causal."[34]

C. Food Shortage in the Ancient Near East

As I have argued above, many food shortages are significantly complicated by human factors, rather than simply resulting from crop failure. War, systemic pressure, and distribution serve as important factors in a lack of nutrition. In this section, I will trace links between fertility and famine that arise in ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography. I begin with a discussion of Egypt, then move to early Mesopotamia and Neo-Assyria, before finally coming to the West Semitic context—thus in some sense drawing closer to the situation of ancient Israel and the biblical texts.[35] Significantly, the collated evidence places kings in a pivotal position: as the maintainer of fertility in the land, as ritual participant, as military leader, as builder of public works, as cultivator, and as provider of social stability through attention to justice and the people.

In Egypt, famine or food shortage played an important ideological role in structuring society. Food shortages here were often intrinsically related to the lack of sufficient inundation by the Nile. This basic reality makes it even more striking that shortages were understood directly in relation to management of food supplies by nomarchs (provincial governors) or the pharaoh.[36] As stated in the *Instruction of Amenemhet I* (Twelfth Dynasty, Middle Kingdom, ca. 1990–1960 B.C.E.), the deceased king claims: "I was grain-maker, beloved of Nepri (the grain god), Hapy (the Nile) honored me on every field, None hungered in my years."[37] By making Pharaoh the linchpin between

34. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, 35.

35. G. A. Anderson (*Sacrifices and Offerings*, 106) argues that the attributions of causes of famine differ according to literary genre. He notes that mythic texts locate the cause of drought in the absence of a fertility deity: e.g., the results of Baal's demise at the hands of Mot in *KTU* 1:6.4.1–3, 12–14; Telepinu's disappearance (*ANET*, 126–28; *COS*, 1:57, 151–53); and Dumuzi/Tammuz's stay in the underworld are popular examples. The role of deities as providers of rain, on the one hand, and droughts and famines that result from their withholding the rain, on the other, will not be developed here.

36. The "Famine Stele," probably from the Ptolemaic period but attributed to the Old Kingdom Pharaoh Djoser, demonstrates the ruler's role in overseeing proper inundation of the Nile. See Carsten Peust, "Hungersnotstele," *TUAT* n.s. 1:208–17.

37. Translation from Miriam Lichtheim, "Amenemhet," *COS*, 1:36, 66–68 (here, p. 67). See the discussion in John Baines, "Ancient Egyptian Kingship: Official Forms, Rhetoric, Context," in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient*

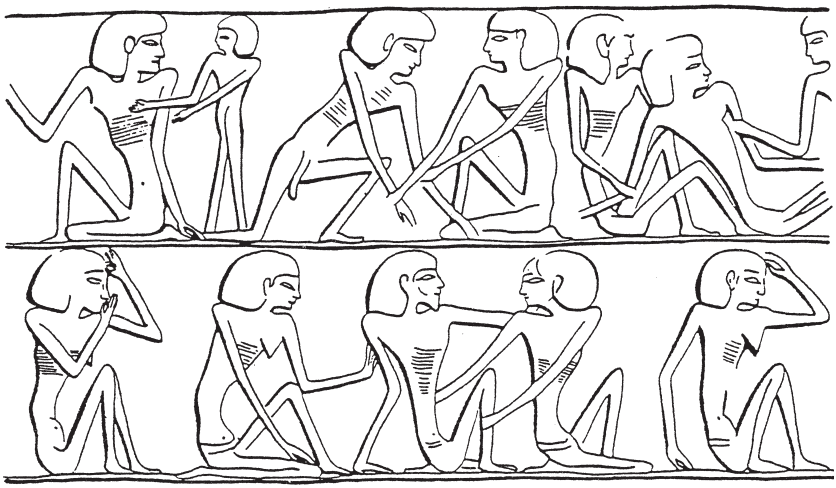

Fig. 1. Limestone relief from the inner wall of the approach to the Unas Pyramid, Saqqara (end of the Fifth Dynasty). Drawing reproduced with permission from Thomas Staubli, *Das Image der Nomaden im Alten Israel und in der Ikonographie seiner sesshaften Nachbarn* (OBO 107; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) fig. 3.

the Nile inundation and the gods, Egyptian thinkers developed a logical connection between famine and social unrest:

> The Egyptians viewed food deprivation as a liminal experience, approaching chaos. . . . The evocation of the elite suffering famine is also an essential feature of the social anarchy described in texts such as *The Prophecy of Neferty* and *The Admonitions of Ipuwer*.[38]

This understanding may best be comprehended visually. Graphically depicted, the care received from one's king—in this case a divine-human pharaoh—resulted in plenty, while those outside his provision wasted away from hunger. The causeway leading to the valley temple of King Unas (Wenis), from Saqqara, ca. 2500 B.C.E, shows emaciated figures with protruding ribs and pained facial expressions. These figures represent nomads from beyond the borders of Egypt whom the pharaoh allowed into Egypt so that they could take refuge during a time of drought (fig. 1). Staubli interprets the upper register to depict a child looking toward a woman (its mother) for nourishment from her shriveled breast (left), while the upper-

Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar (ed. J. Day; JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 16–53 (here, pp. 32–34).

38. Coulon, "Famine," 2.

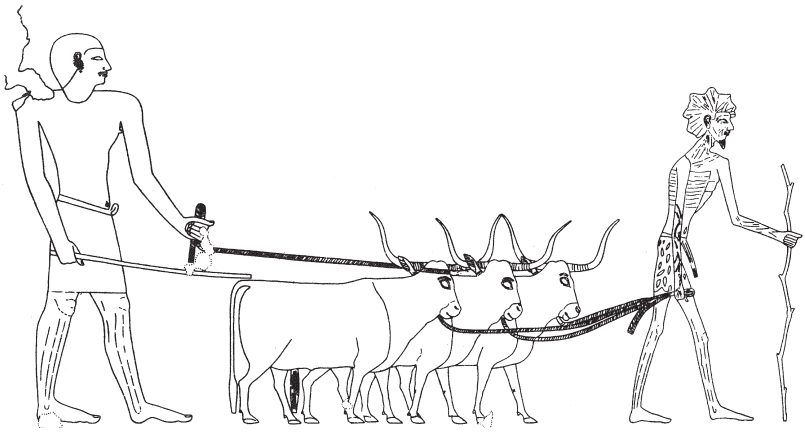

Fig. 2. Limestone relief from the grave of Ukhotep, son of Senbi from Meir (Cusae), Twelfth Dynasty (ca. 1900 B.C.E.). Drawing reproduced with permission from Thomas Staubli, *Das Image der Nomaden*, fig. 7.

middle and upper-right figures exhibit tense quarrels, perhaps over food.[39] Likewise, Papyrus Anastasi VI (ca. 1200 B.C.E.) records an Egyptian border official informing a superior that he has allowed Bedouin (Shasu) to pass into Egypt, "in order to revive themselves and revive their flocks *from the great life force of Pharaoh*,"[40] showing that this sort of migration to Egyptian territory was known.

A later juxtaposition of nomads, depicted as both small and malnourished, with well-fed, large Egyptian officials demonstrates the importance of ties to the central regime.[41] Especially given the frequent depictions of agricultural abundance in Egyptian settings such as funerary depictions of abundance, the contrast is drastic between the riches of those with ties to the protected political culture land of Egypt and the liminal asylum seekers from outside (see fig. 2).

In Mesopotamia as well, the issue of food security features as an important category in depicting a ruler's successful reign. I. Winter states programmatically, "Virtually every Mesopotamian ruler who left royal inscriptions has at some point declared himself to be the provider of 'abundance' for the land, . . . thanks to the privileged relationship he enjoys with a god or the gods."[42] The logic of this

39. Thomas Staubli, *Das Image der Nomaden*, 25.

40. Translation from James P. Allen, "A Report of Bedouin," *COS*, 3:3.5, 16–17 (italics mine).

41. Staubli, *Das Image der Nomaden*, 23–26.

42. Irene J. Winter, "'Ornament and the Rhetoric of Abundance' in Assyria," in *On Art in the Ancient Near East* (2 vols.; CHANE 34; Leiden: Brill, 2010)

tradition was that the ruler and deity supported one another in reciprocal fashion. A prominent example from the Old Babylonian period that Winter investigates is Gudea of Lagash (ca. 2100 B.C.E.), who builds a temple for Ningirsu. The goddess promises to reward this pious action with increased agricultural abundance.[43]

A similar conception appears in Hammurapi's self-presentation in the prologue of his law treatise, which includes a description of Hammurapi as "the pious prince, . . . who sustains his people in crisis, who secures their foundations in peace in the midst of the city of Babylon." This statement points to an almost inherent connection between divine provision, successful administration, and the abundance of food.[44] Furthermore, texts emphasize the Mesopotamian state's role in constructing and maintaining irrigation dikes. The motif's importance extends to regions beyond those dominated by irrigation agriculture, noting the state's responsibility to protect the country from military attack—that is, both the fortified urban centers and the agriculture-providing hinterlands.

This early connection of the state to agricultural abundance also appears closer to the time of the biblical texts, in Neo-Assyrian annals that depict the king as provider and as guardian of fertility. The *topos* of the king as cultivator or gardener (*ikkaru*) appears first in the annals of Tiglath-pileser I from the Middle Assyrian period (1114–1076 B.C.E.), and his annals exercised powerful influence over later Neo-Assyrian historiography.[45] The literary motif includes heaping up grain and rare fruit, as well as other paradisiacal features.[46] The

1:1163–83 (here, p. 1163 [repr. from *ErIsr* 27 (Hayim and Miriam Tadmor volume; 2002) 252–64]).

43. Irene J. Winter, "Representing Abundance: A Visual Dimension of the Agrarian State," in *On Art in the Ancient Near East*, 2:199–225 (here, pp. 200–202).

44. Translation by Martha Roth, "The Laws of Hammurabi," *COS*, 2:131: 337. Such examples can be multiplied: cf. Winter ("Representing Abundance") and G. A. Anderson (*Sacrifices and Offerings*, 106–8) for the Old Babylonian and earlier material. In "Ornament and the Rhetoric," 164–73, Winter notes that there are no undisputed iconographic representations of this connection in Mesopotamia, but she does reinterpret the Nimrud throne room portrayal of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.E.) gesturing to the "sacred" (or abundant) tree (BM ME 124531) as demonstrating that the king is close to the tree because he is the metaphorical linchpin for the empire's fecundity.

45. For references, see Winter, "Ornament and the Rhetoric," 164; compare with Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26, especially v. 10.

46. For details and discussion, see Douglas J. Green, *"I Undertook Great Works": The Ideology of Domestic Achievements in West Semitic Royal Inscriptions* (FAT 2/41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 47–64.

annals of Tiglath-pileser III refer to Adad, the storm god, as the one "who heaps up abundance and plenty." This depiction of the king appears in context with his military exploits as well, demonstrating a significant link between military prowess—viewed as the acquisition of new resources and the protection of Assyria's bounty—and agricultural fecundity. In various ways, Ashurnasirpal II, Sargon II, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal echo this claim to having provided abundantly for the needs of Assyria.[47]

The construction of waterways played an important role in the image and activity of the Neo-Assyrian rulers, beginning with Ashurbanipal II (ninth century), and resulted in over 100 km of irrigation canals.[48] While economic value may have been the primary motivation for construction of many of the canals, they also played ideological roles, as demonstrated in the royal inscriptions and in the planting of exotic gardens in the imperial capitals. The peoples who were thus deported also encountered the greatness of the Assyrian ruler's ability to change the face of the land, literally, through the building of waterworks. The presence of royal and divine reliefs at the offtakes to fields from the canals also pointed to the rulers' strength.[49] These royal actions and their contribution to the aura of Neo-Assyrian royal ideology show the depth of the connection between agricultural fertility and royal prowess.

A related expression of a ruler's ample provision of sustenance for his subjects was affordable food. A case in point is a tariff inscription, probably from Nabonidus, that promises 234 sila (liters) of barley, 270 sila of dates, or 18 sila of wine (the "beer of the mountains that is not found in my land") for one shekel each.[50] This "goodness" all takes place as a result of the deity Sin's satisfaction with Nabonidus's good deeds, leading Sin to have Adad and Ea bless the land with abundant water. This embattled ruler attempts to garner support by demonstrating his royal wisdom, which is evident in the favor of the gods, who bring about an abundance of agricultural goods, so that the result is cheap barley, wool, dates, and other

47. Note the references in Winter, "Ornament and the Rhetoric," 163 n. 1.

48. For one recent overview, see Tony J. Wilkinson et al., "Landscape and Settlement in the Neo-Assyrian Empire," *BASOR* 340 (2005) 23–56 (here, p. 27).

49. Ibid., 32.

50. Adopted from Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Grossen, samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik* (AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001) 532. It is not completely clear that this inscription comes from Nabonidus, but he appears to be the most likely king.

products of this sort. Advertising these deflationary conditions is the king's attempt to secure the support of those needing to purchase agricultural goods, but it does not necessarily address the concerns of individual farmers. It is more likely an appeal to urban dwellers or elites, who are less self-sufficient. This logic appears in a number of early law treatises such as those by Hammurapi and Eshnunna, as well as much later in the inscription of the Neo-Assyrian Ashurbanipal. Hints of the above *topoi* are taken up in West Semitic royal inscriptions and biblical texts, as I will show below.

Turning to some of the causes of food shortage in the ancient Near East: many arose from direct military contexts, similar to those cataloged for Late Antiquity. The setting of a city under siege provides a case in point. The goal was to weaken, dishearten, and starve out the defenders. Ephʿal sums up the purpose clearly: "The primary and most common result of blockade is famine, which is intended to break the spirit of the besieged population and to put an end to their ability to resist."[51] Ephʿal notes sieges lasting for Babylon for 15 months (Sennacherib) and 22 months (Ashurbanipal), while Samaria was under siege for 3 years (Shalmaneser V).[52]

The threat of the destruction of a city's agricultural livelihood—especially its fruit trees—was a method employed for millennia by invading armies to pressure besieged cities to capitulate before having lost everything.[53] Along with the destruction of crops, marauding armies appropriated such food as could be found. Younger comments "that part of the Assyrian army's pay was given in rape and plunder of the enemy's land and that this had already transpired *before* the long trek of these deportees to their destinations."[54] Mat-

51. Ephʿal, *The City Besieged*, 57.

52. Ibid., 110–12. Ephʿal provides other examples as well.

53. Jacob L. Wright, "Warfare and Wanton Destruction: A Reexamination of Deuteronomy 20:19–20 in Relation to Ancient Siegecraft," *JBL* 127 (2008) 423–58 (here, pp. 436–37); see also Ephʿal (*The City Besieged*, 53–54), who lists Sargon's "Letter to the God Ashur" concerning his eighth campaign, TCL III 42:265–267; 44:276; 46:296, 303; Ashurbanipal II against Amedu (RIMA 2 220); Shalmanezer III of Damascus (RIMA 3 48:14″–17″); Tiglath-pileser III against Damascus (*ITP* 78:9′–11′).

54. K. Lawson Younger Jr., "'Give Us Our Daily Bread': Everyday Life for the Israelite Deportees," in *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East* (ed. R. Averbeck, M. W. Chavalas, and D. B. Weisberg; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2003) 269–88 (here, p. 271) italics original; cf. Ephʿal, *The City Besieged*, 64: "Ashurbanipal's siege of Babylon began at the ideal time for a siege in terms of the agricultural calendar—the exact period at which the produce had ripened, but before the people could manage to gather it (or at least most of it) and bring it inside the

ters in Classical Greece were similar: military force was viewed as a "natural" means of production due to acquiring new land and resources.[55] Finally, the inability, because of war, to destroy locust eggs before they hatched from known breeding locations can be traced back as the cause for outbreaks of plagues, as Radner argues for two occurrences in Northern Syria (ca. 1700 B.C.E. and ca. 1200 B.C.E.).[56] So even this sort of plague is closely related to peace and stability.

West Semitic inscriptions show conceptions that are similar to ideas found in the Mesopotamian material: both indicate that adequate provisions were considered to be a demonstration of royal success and piety. I begin with the inscription by King Kilamuwa (*KAI* 24; from late ninth-century B.C.E. Zincirli, ancient Sam'al). Lines 11–12 depict abundance in Ya'diya during his reign:[57] "And whoever had not (even) seen a sheep's face, I made him the owner of a flock. And whoever had not (even) seen an ox's face, I made him owner of a herd."[58] The inscription imagines both herds and flocks for subjects who had no experience with sheep or oxen. Although herds and flocks were not primarily used for meat consumption in the ancient Levant (oxen were used primarily for traction, and sheep provided wool), provision of meat is implicit in the inscription, and grain and other crops are the provisions that are implied by the reference to oxen.

Likewise, in the Hadad inscription (*KAI* 214; ca. 750 B.C.E., Zincirli), lines 1–8 narrate a transition from devastation to agricultural plenty under Panamuwa's kingship, which demonstrates the gods' favor on his reign: "In my youth [the gods] . . . stood with me. Then whatever I took hold of with [my] hands succeeded. And whatever I requested from the gods they gave to me. And they brought the wasteland to life [ ] a land of barley."[59]

Provision of abundance in terms of luxury foods and full grain stores features as one of the first responsibilities mentioned in the

city (a certain period of time was also required for threshing and winnowing)." The same practice took place in Egypt; see Coulon, "Famine."

55. Paul Cartledge, "The Economy (Economies) of Ancient Greece," in *The Ancient Economy* (ed. S. von Reden and W. Scheidel; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002) 11–31 (here, p. 28).

56. Karen Radner, "Fressen und gefressen werden: Heuschrecken als Katastrophe und Delikatesse im Alten Vorderen Orient," *WO* 34 (2004) 7–22; cited in J. L. Wright, "Warfare and Wanton Destruction," 429.

57. Green (*I Undertook Great Works*, 152) calls it "Utopia."

58. Translation from ibid., 143.

59. Ibid., 175–90; translation and reconstruction of the text: on pp. 178–80.

Azatiwadda inscription by a high official (perhaps a caretaker of the realm) from Karatepe around 700 B.C.E. (*KAI* 26 I 5–6; II 7–8, 13–16), a motif that also appears in biblical texts such as 2 Chr 8:4, 6. Although it is not explicit, D. Green argues that the motif of abundance that appears throughout this group of texts finds its meaning in a binary relationship between the abundant center and the wasteland on the periphery. While such a contrast might be more likely in Mesopotamia and Egypt, with their respective great rivers, this focus on abundance in the West Semitic texts illustrates that the West Semitic ruler was considered central in the establishment, distribution, and protection of food provisions.[60]

In sum, the comparative data provide a differentiated picture of the provision of sustenance and the extent and nature of food crises. First, malnutrition was prevalent and was at least known in most quarters of society in antiquity, but not all shortages were famines, per se. Second, while natural climatic events played a significant role in precipitating drastic shortages, the onset of famine generally required the help of political factors, especially military incursions. Finally, textual and iconographic sources link adequate food supply to a divine-royal nexus of blessing and power. Kings displayed their proximity to the gods by pointing to the wide, inexpensive availability of foodstuffs.

3. Food Shortage in the Biblical Texts

Several basic insights arise from the terminology used for famine and hunger in the biblical texts. The basic Hebrew root for food shortage, *rʿb*, appears most often as the noun *rāʿāb*.[61] There are several important lexical observations. First, the verb generally occurs with a collective and never with an individual human subject; so the texts depict famine as the experience of a group. However, this does not imply that it is always—or mostly—a famine in the narrower sense defined above. As Seidl suggests, the Hebrew term *rāʿāb* has a broader continuum of meaning, from hunger to famine (*Hunger* and

60. Ibid., 310–12.

61. Also as a verb in Qal (stative, 10×) and Hiphil (2×); and the abstract *rĕʿābôn*. For the Semitic cognates in Ugaritic, Geʾez, and Arabic as well as the LXX renderings and the use of *berû* in Akkadian and *kpn*/*kpnʾ* in Phoenician, Aramaic, and Job 5:22, 30:3, see Seidl, "רָעַב." A second important root is *ḥsr*, "lack." With connections to food, it appears in Deut 2:7, 8:9; Judg 18:7, 10; 2 Sam 3:29 (as a curse on Joab's house), 1 Kgs 4:27 (on Solomon's table); Neh 9:2; Job 4:11 (lions), 38:21 (animals); Ps 34:10 (lions); Prov 12:9 (as a fool); Isa 51:14; Jer 44:18 (// to famine); Ezek 4:17; Amos 4:6.

Hungersnot).[62] The term therefore never refers to the food deprivation of an individual, and I infer from this that there is no specific Hebrew term for "famine" in the narrower sense, though the expressions *ḥzq* (Qal) *rāʿāb* (Gen 41:56–57, 1 Kgs 18:2, 2 Kgs 25:3) and *kbd* (Qal) *rāʿāb* (Gen 12:10; 43:1; 47:4, 13, 20)—both of which can be rendered "hunger became severe"—do indicate the more drastic side of this continuum. For example, Gen 12:10 states: "Then there was hunger in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there. For the hunger was severe in the land" (*kî-kābēd hārāʿāb bāʾāreṣ*).

In addition to simple lexical identifications, some texts describe food shortages with more metaphorical expressions. Amos 4:6 states, "I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places," meaning that the teeth are clean because they have nothing to chew. Lev 26:26 similarly sets out a short vignette: "When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven, and they shall dole out your bread by weight; and though you eat, you shall not be satisfied." Shortage is seen in the fact that the bread must be weighed to make sure that everyone receives the exact intended ration. Everyone will want more, so precision in weight is intended to eliminate grumbling about errors in distribution. This initial investigation shows the social nature of hunger and suggests a broader spectrum implied than simply "famine."

A. Causes of Food Shortages

It is possible to interpret the causes for food shortages in various ways. G. Anderson's analysis of the comparative ancient Near Eastern material sees two causes that differentiate themselves based on the genre of text. Mythic texts locate the cause of food shortages in actions in the divine realm, while royal texts locate the cause in military threats.[63] While this distinction does generally hold, the biblical

62. Ibid. Modern English translations, e.g., the NRSV and NIV translate "famine" in over 80 of its 101 occurrences. The LXX uses *limos* almost exclusively, though *sitodeia* appears in Neh 9:15. This latter text is an interesting case because the English translations (and German) also use "hunger/hungry," showing that they too admit some differentiation in the stages of shortage. For a summary on Classical Antiquity, see Charo Rovira-Guardiola, "Famine and Food Shortages, Greece and Rome," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (ed. Roger S. Bagnall et al.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2012) n.p., http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah22111 [accessed 30 September 2013]. She writes, "In the Greek world, there was a clear distinction between famine (*limos*) and shortages of food."

63. G. A. Anderson, *Sacrifices and Offerings*, 106.

material can best be viewed in other categories. W. Harrelson also sees food shortages as arising in two different ways, but this is not related to the question of mythic versus royal genre, as Anderson argues. Harrelson suggests that, on the one hand, there are times when a food shortage just seems to happen without a given moral reason. On the other hand, there are texts that present shortage as a punishment for injustice.[64]

Within the first category are the texts that provide no cause at all, such as Gen 12:10; 26:1, 41; and Ruth 1:11; others highlight a "natural" cause, such as drought (e.g., 1 Kgs 17:1).

The second category of famines in the biblical texts take place as divine punishment for injustice and disobedience. The many occurrences of the diad or triad of food shortage, sword, and disease in Jeremiah and Ezekiel (also the curse list of Deuteronomy 28, esp. v. 48; and motif in Lev 26:26 and Amos 4:4–11) are instances of this. The list of disasters—food shortage, military attack, and sometimes disease (12× without; 15× with disease [*deber*] in Jeremiah alone)—describes, in "non-mythic" fashion, what takes places when an enemy army invades.[65]

Jer 14:1–18 provides the highest concentration of this combination (1× with *deber*, 5× without), with prevalent connections to food practices—fasting and sacrifice. Yahweh refuses to step in and bring rain in spite of a horrendous drought (vv. 1–9), also forbidding Jeremiah to intercede on the people's behalf. Yahweh will not respond with rain to either the people's fasting or their sacrifices but will instead bring destruction, described as follows: "If I go out into the field, look—those killed by the sword! And if I enter the city, look—those sick with famine!" (v. 18). Those outside some kind of protective structure were put to the sword, while those who were fortunate enough to retreat behind strong walls could anticipate an ever-diminishing supply of food and water, accompanied by diseases arising from close quarters and malnutrition.[66]

64. Harrelson, "Famine in the Perspective of Biblical Judgments and Promises."

65. G. A. Anderson, *Sacrifices and Offerings*, 106. He uses the term "non-mythic" to contrast with the "mythic" treatments of famine that attribute it to divine will, such as the Ugaritic Aqhat and Kirta narratives. Cf. Warren C. Robertson, *Drought, Famine, Plague and Pestilence: Ancient Israel's Understandings of and Responses to Natural Catastrophes* (Gorgias Dissertations in Biblical Studies 45; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2010) 101. He notes, "[T]he ancient Israelites understood natural disasters to be categorically continuous with defeat in warfare."

66. G. A. Anderson, *Sacrifices and Offerings*, 115.

The appearance of shortages in these contexts, then, is part of a military strategy, like those described above for the ancient Near East in general. Illustrative of this is Judg 6:3–4, which depicts the Midianites and other enemies as choosing the season "after Israel had sown" to raid and destroy produce so that "they would leave no means of sustenance in Israel" (v. 4). In the other texts with shortages resulting from direct human causes, combinations with siege warfare appear in 2 Kings 6–7; 2 Chr 32:11; and Ezek 4:16–17.

A unique punishment in the form of a food shortage due to disobedience appears in 2 Sam 21:1 as consequence for a specific royal sin (committed by Saul).[67] Also in response to royal error, a shortage appears as one of the choices for punishment in response to David's census in 2 Sam 24:13 / 1 Chr 21:12. These instances take on increased meaning when understood in light of the connection between the ideology of royal food provision and divine blessing. The texts portray the kings' unrighteousness as the direct cause for food shortage in the land.

B. Living with Food Shortage

While some biblical texts directly address the causes of famines, the human responses to these difficult circumstances can also be quite varied.

Perhaps best known is the progression of events in Gen 41:54–57 and 47:14–26, which describe the reduction of small landholders and nomads/seminomads to state slaves. When the shortage hits, the residents of Egypt cry out to the state (Pharaoh) for provisions, and the state (Joseph) responds by opening up the storehouses. "The whole world" (Gen 41:57, *kōl-hā'āreṣ*) enters Egypt to purchase grain. Then, several years into the shortage, Egypt and Canaan sell their animals to the state for food (47:16–17). The following year, the people sell their land and themselves.[68]

67. Brian Britt, "Death, Social Conflict, and the Barley Harvest in the Hebrew Bible," *JHebS* 5 (2005) article 1.

68. Two recent works have considered famine and food in the Joseph cycle, investigating their roles in the plot without, however, laying as much emphasis on the meaning of the motif itself: Stephen B. Chapman, "Food, Famine, and the Nations: A Canonical Approach to Genesis," in *Genesis and Christian Theology* (ed. N. MacDonald, M. Elliott, and G. Macaskill; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012) 323–33; Katie M. Heffelfinger, "Food Fight: The Significance of Food in Genesis 37–50," paper presented at the SBL Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 2006.

2 Kgs 4:38–41 narrates the sort of response that Garnsey found in the classical world and that was delineated in the quotation from Arnold above: when normal food sources dry up, one turns to "substitute foods." In this particular case, Elisha's followers stew an unknown wild vine and gourds, and they taste poisonous to them. Brueggemann, who unlike many interpreters actually takes the setting of food shortage seriously for this short narrative, still views the choice of the unknown plant as "careless, because anything edible looks good. As anyone knows who picks greens or mushrooms, some are not edible."[69] Rather than judging a situation as careless, however, one might understand the story as food shortage that led to situations so dire that there was little choice but to supplement one's diet with generally inedible materials, matching the situations described in modern periods of famine described above.

Job 30:3–4 speaks of similar practices: "Through want and hard hunger [*ûbĕkāpān galmûd*], they gnaw the dry and desolate ground, they pick mallow and the leaves of bushes, and to warm themselves the roots of broom."[70] This text introduces a different context, however. First, no hint of widespread food shortage is given. The individuals who are turning to alternate foods come instead from the fringes of society, a datum that demonstrates how strategic social status is to the enjoyment of sufficient or high-quality sustenance—similar to the logic for Egyptian iconography.

Another common response to shortage throughout history and in the biblical texts is migration.[71] Jacob and his family move to Egypt, as did Abraham before them (Gen 12:10). Naomi and her family

69. Walter Brueggemann, *1 and 2 Kings* (Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary 8; Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000) 325. Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor (*2 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 11; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988] 59) find the material situation to be of little consequence: "The historical setting is, moreover, secondary in importance to these stories which heap praise upon the prophetic master." More attuned to the conditions of famine is Tamis Hoover Renteria, "The Elijah/Elisha Stories: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Prophets and People in Ninth-Century B.C.E. Israel," in *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective* (ed. R. B. Coote; Semeia Studies; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 110.

70. Kegler ("Hunger," 322) suggests linking *galmûd* to the infertility that results from undernutrition.

71. In the modern West, this is akin to the Irish response to the Great Potato Famine around the 1850s.

similarly uproot themselves from Bethlehem, the "house of bread," to find bread in Moab (Ruth 1).

A more extreme scenario is portrayed in 1 Kgs 17:8–16. During a long drought, among the many other sufferers is a Phoenician widow and her son in Sidonite Zarephath. Yahweh commands Elijah the prophet to travel to her and ask her for sustenance. She too, however, has almost nothing to eat. Elijah's petition for something to eat is met with the response (v. 12): "There is nothing baked [*māʿôg*],[72] only a handful of flour in the jar and a little oil in the jug. I am about to gather a couple of sticks; then I will go in and make it for myself and my son. We will eat it, then we will die." When she speaks of a final meal, she conveys that she is giving up hope. Her despair is increased by the fact that it is not only her own death that she contemplates but also the death of her son.

Finally, 2 Kings 6–7 (esp. 6:24–30, 7:3–4) paints a grave picture of siege-induced famine.[73] Here the connection between material lack and political failure (chaos and mismanagement) develops from the premise that a primary responsibility in the ancient Egyptian, Israelite, and broader Near Eastern conception of the king was to "give bread to the hungry." The connection is articulated clearly in Isa 8:21: "They will pass through it, distressed and hungry. When they are hungry they will become angry, and they will curse their king and his god."[74] This role is also articulated in the Psalms' proclamation regarding the ideal king in Ps 72:12–16, which Ps 146:7 goes on to ascribe to Yahweh in the role of divine king.[75] 2 Kings 6–7 displays a similarly keen understanding of food shortage and royal responsibility.

As a preliminary introduction to the motif in this section, 2 Kgs 6:14 introduces an Aramean siege of Dothan, a situation that, as I have shown above, would entail the onset of food shortages. The narrative goes on to turn the expected food-shortage motif on its

72. This is the only appearance of this form, which I am taking as a nominal form of *ʿ-w-g*, following *HALOT*, 611, and in agreement with the LXX's *egkruphias*.

73. See Steven L. McKenzie (*The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* [VTSup 42; Leiden: Brill, 1991] 95–97) for an overview of compositional issues, pointing to the post-Dtr inclusion of these stories in the book of Kings.

74. Cf. Kegler, "Hunger," 325.

75. Cf. Ps 145:15–16, 147:14. Klaus-Peter Adam, in this volume, points to a similar royal expectation in the redaction of Psalms 15–24 (esp. Psalms 22–23).

head, ending in the Israelite king's heaping up a big pile (*kērâ gĕdôlâ*) of food (6:23) in Samaria for the Aramean captives, at Elisha's command.[76]

More-detailed depictions of extreme shortage arise in the narrative that immediately follows. The king of Aram gathers his entire army and sets Samaria under siege (*wayyāṣar ʿal-šōmrôn*, 6:24). This siege leads to the expected shortage (*rāʿāb gādôl*, v. 25), the direness of which is described in economic equations: the head of a donkey costs 80 [shekels] of silver, and ¼ qab of dove's dung costs 5 [shekels] of silver.[77] This is no question that these equations imply an extreme inflation of food prices, even for these low-grade "famine foods"—quite in contrast to the ample inexpensive food in the ancient Near Eastern inscriptions mentioned above. Furthermore, any community solidarity that led to the sharing of food appears to have broken down by this stage of the siege.

In this dire situation, a woman cries out to the Israelite king (v. 26). Her cry—*ṣāʿăqāh*—mirrors the similar cry of the Israelites to God in Egypt prior to their deliverance (Exod 2:23; 3:7, 9) and the indebted and hungry to Nehemiah (Neh 5:1); these are comparable with the cry of distress to a king for justice elsewhere (2 Sam 19:29, 2 Kgs 8:3).[78] The notion that ideal kingship includes provision of food for the people forms the backdrop for the king's response to her plea: "From which source shall I be able to [draw in order to] save you? From the threshing floor or the vat?"[79]

The woman goes on to narrate an extreme response to hunger (2 Kgs 6:28–31).[80] She made a deal with a neighbor to cook and eat

76. See below, §4, for further discussion of the passage and the translation, which follows Ronnie Goldstein, "The Provision of Food to the Aramaean Captives in II Reg 6,22–23," *ZAW* 126 (2014) 101–5.

77. The meaning of the expression "dove's dung" (*ḥărê yônîm*) is debated; see, e.g., Walter W. Müller, "Eselfleisch und Taubendreck: Zur Hungersnotspeise in Samaria nach 2 Kön 6,25," *BN* 46 (1989) 17–23. My rendering follows the *Kethiv* of the MT. What exactly it refers to or what it was used for is also unclear. Note the use of "their dung" (*ḥărêhem*) in Isa 36:12 / 2 Kgs 18:27 along with "their urine" (*šênêhem*), which the Rab Shekah claims that the defenders on Jerusalem's wall are consuming during the siege. Food shortage and provision play a key role in this speech, as indicated by the promise of plenty in Isa 36:16–17.

78. Perhaps food shortage should be considered part of the suffering in Egypt as well.

79. Similarly, Marvin Alan Sweeney, *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007) 311.

80. Hermann-Josef Stipp (*Elischa, Propheten, Gottesmänner: Die Kompositionsgeschichte des Elischazyklus und verwandter Texte, rekonstruiert auf der Basis von*

their sons in succession.[81] They cooked and ate the first woman's son, but the second woman was not forthcoming with hers, hiding him instead. The devastating plight is portrayed not only in the cannibalism but also in the breakdown of mores seen in the woman's willingness to take this sort of complaint to the king.[82]

A final response to famine appears soon after, in the logic of the lepers on the margins of Samaria (2 Kgs 7:3–4). These outcasts come to the conclusion that they are sure to die if they remain in the besieged city, so they may as well venture out to see if the Aramean army will have mercy on them, on the off-chance—however small—of receiving provisions.

As the short and schematic investigations above show, the continuum ranging from food shortage to famine appears with quite surprising regularity in the biblical texts, indicating its importance as part of the concrete background and as a primary theme of the literature. As in the broader ancient Near Eastern contexts, the dynamics of liminality, migration, "famine foods," and the expectation of royal provision bound up with the king's special relationship to God are deeply embedded in the Hebrew Bible. The texts offer extreme depictions, often with an awareness of the considerable existential and psychological struggles that accompany questions of severe shortage.

4. Implications of Food Shortage and Famine for Feasting

I turn here to the relationship between shortage and feast, considering the influence of famines and shortages on conceptions of festive meals. I will consider three aspects: (1) divine provision for basic needs and pilgrimage feasts; (2) royal wisdom, plenty, and (victory) banquets; and (3) hospitality for hungry travelers. These categories

Text- und Literaturkritik zu 1 Kön 20.22 und 2 Kön 2–7 [Münchener Universitätsschriften 24; Sankt Ottilien: EOS, 1987] 343–44) sees this section as a later insertion. This judgment, based on various composition-critical observations, could also fit with my understanding of the famine thematic, in that this section takes the focus away from the royal provision expected from the king.

81. On the *topos* of cannibalism in the ancient Near East, see Ephʿal, *The City Besieged*, 61–62.

82. Thanks to Janling Fu, who pointed out to me that this also reverses the typical understanding of the sons in providing for the family. They now *become* the final provision.

should be taken as neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, as I will show below.

One connection that is found on the most basic level is that, regardless of the type of feast, the ability to put on such an event implies access to the necessary provisions. The depiction of nutritional plenty in antiquity appears against the backdrop of the regular struggle to have enough: Deut 26:1–11 presents a clear example of this connection, contrasting the perishing Aramean ancestor who, as landless, struggles to sustain his alimentary needs (v. 5). The current worshiper points to the harvest produced in vv. 2 and 10 and the feast celebrated in v. 11. [83] This text portrays the intertwining of divine provision in the form of the land, divine blessing in the form of agricultural abundance, and political stability and well-being in the form of the lack of Egyptian hegemony. These factors establish the basis for the communal sacred feast in the sacred precincts (v. 11).

Furthermore, the earliest festival calendar, Exod 23:14–17, connects two of the three pilgrimage feasts (*ḥag haqqāṣîr*, "Feast of Harvest," and *ḥag hāʾāsīp*, "Feast of Ingathering") directly with the agricultural harvest. These observations show that food crises root the practice of ritual feasting strongly within the thematic field of provision, fertility, and prosperity—in the case of biblical texts, especially by Yahweh, on whose provision adherents should rely—similar to the cultures around them with their myths and rituals. In the biblical texts, this issue of reliance appears repeatedly with respect to the "longing for Egypt" and its bounty during the wilderness wandering, in texts such as Exodus 16 and Numbers 11. God's ability and willingness to provide underlies the feasts in Deuteronomy, both in the connection of 26:1–11 with feasts and in the larger context of Deuteronomy 8.

2 Kings 6–7 closely links food shortage, royal provision, and victory and hospitality feasting. [84] As mentioned above, the ancient Near Eastern and ancient Israelite monarch was expected to care for the hungry, which the pharaoh took seriously in Gen 41:33–57 and as is implied in the good king's provision for the needy in Ps 72:12–16.

83. Peter Altmann, "Feast, Famine, and History," *ZAW* 124 (2012) 555–67.

84. Two other important texts are Genesis 41–44 and Ruth. Genesis 41–44 intertwines the categories of royal provision and hospitality, two motifs prominent in 2 Kings 6–7, while Ruth treats famine and hospitality. Due to space limitations, I will not discuss either here.

In 2 Kings 6–7, the interplay between Elisha, the Arameans, and the Israelite king over the question of "real power" takes place largely in terms of the continuum that runs from food shortage to abundance in feasting.[85]

The entry point is an Aramean siege of Dothan, set in place to capture Elisha. Yet, while the siege is probably intended either to starve Elisha or to pressure the residents of Dothan to deliver him to the enemy, the story takes an unexpected turn by displaying Elisha's power over both the Arameans and the Israelite king.

Following the miraculous blinding of the Aramean force, Elisha leads them into the middle of the city of Samaria, before the Israelite king, whom the narrative portrays as excited by means of his twice-repeated question: "Shall I strike, shall I strike [them], my father?" (2 Kgs 6:21). The fact that Elisha, not the Israelite king, holds the power to make this decision regarding the prisoners' treatment shows where the real power over political and military events lies in the narrative (with Yahweh and his agent, the prophet). And ironically, instead of replying tit-for-tat to the Arameans' siege—understood as suffering due to the food shortage—Elisha proclaims that the king should throw the captives a lavish feast (*wayyikreh lāhem kērâ gĕdôlâ*) and send them home (6:23). The focus on the feast is underlined not only through the use of the cognate accusative but additionally by the inclusion of the verbs *ʾkl* and *šth* in both v. 22 and v. 23. The *leḥem* and *mayim* in v. 22 are ordinary food rather than feasting provisions,[86] a fact that highlights the simple contrast between the dearth of food experienced in a siege and the sufficiency of basic necessities.

The feasting itself comes in v. 23, using terms derived from *krh*, for which there are several possible derivations.[87] The terms here are typically linked to Akk. *qerû, qerītu*, a general term for banqueting.[88] R. Goldstein suggests that better cognates are found in Akk. *karû*

85. For an overview of the centrality of this theme in this larger section of 2 Kings, see Brueggemann, *1 and 2 Kings*, 326.

86. See Ruth 2:9, 14.

87. This root only appears in this passage and in Job 40:30 if one follows the LXX translation (though not all interpreters understand it to mean "feast, feed").

88. Following Cogan and Tadmor (*2 Kings*, 74), among others, with the West Semitic equivalent *qrʾ*, especially given the regularity with which this verb appears in banquet settings in Ugaritic. A similar root, *kry/w*, does not appear in feasting contexts in Ugaritic.

and Aram. *kry*, both meaning "heap or pile."[89] Goldstein notes the uses of the Akkadian term in several different contexts: provision for captives, for a superior army as a way of paying homage, or as divine/royal abundance for subjects. However, the general tone is the link to stores of food, which points back to the prerogative of royal provision. The king is the one who piles up the heaps (3ms form of *krh*), but the nature of the Israelite victory over the Arameans deviates from the typical military clash. Perhaps this also hints at the fact that it is not some type of victory celebration but a feast that incorporates concerns about hospitality for captive enemies with an emphasis on provision from royal storehouses.[90]

The next episode (2 Kgs 6:24–7:20) contains a series of scenes that build up an extreme portrayal of siege-induced shortage, starvation, and societal breakdown. The connection between royal-divine provision again plays a significant role. The Israelite king's oath and attempt to kill Elisha that day (6:31–33) follow his admission of inability to provide food for his subjects and his experience of the breakdown of social order and cannibalism that follow (6:25–30).[91] The king declares his weakness directly to the woman (v. 27) and his loss of hope in Yahweh's assistance in alleviating the famine (v. 33).

Upon this admission, Elisha demonstrates *his* connection to Yahweh in matters of food provision. He takes up the economic equation of food prices, declaring that on the next day the Samarian city's prices would be slashed, so that 1 seah (7 liters) of flour would cost 1 shekel, and 2 seahs of barley would cost 1 shekel (7:1). The shortage given in financial terms is recalled by use of the same metaphor that was used to describe the extreme nature of the shortage (in 6:25).

The answer of the king's adviser that Yahweh could not make this happen even if he were to "make windows in the sky" (7:2) is remi-

89. Goldstein, "The Provision of Food"; cf. *CAD* K 226–28: *karû* A: "pile of barley (prepared for storage)"; *kry, kry'*, meaning "heap, pile," *CAL* (http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/ [accessed Jan 23, 2014]).

90. Also Goldstein, "The Provision of Food"; Robert LaBarbera, "The Man of War and the Man of God: Social Satire in 2 Kings 6:8–7:20," *CBQ* 46 (1984) 637–51 (here, p. 644) notes a connection to Lot's hospitality in Genesis 19 through the blindness motif.

91. Volkmar Fritz (*Das Zweite Buch der Könige* [ZBK 10/2; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1998] 40) rightly detects later hands at work in 6:31–33 (he sees them all the way to 7:2, and again in 7:16b–20). If 6:31–33 is later, it emphasizes this ideology.

niscent of the Syro-Palestinian conceptions of the divine provision of fruitfulness because Baal was said to throw down the rain from heaven through a window.[92] A comparison with Nabonidus's tariff inscription above is also striking, in that both the inscription and 2 Kings combine the favor of the gods with ample rain and low-priced food.

The final episode (7:3) concerns four lepers who take a risk—rather than stay in the city and die of starvation, they go out to the Aramean camp in hopes that the Arameans will have mercy on them and give them food, which would be similar to the Arameans themselves when they were captive in Samaria. They discover that Yahweh has truly answered the Israelite king's ironic request, "May Yahweh deliver you," which was uttered to the bereaved mother (6:27). The divine deliverance reveals the severed link between deity and king: the four outcast lepers are the first to experience the deliverance that has arisen because Yahweh caused the Arameans to hear the sound of an approaching army, which led them to flee, leaving their tents, horses, and even their donkeys behind for the taking.[93] However, because the shortage of food has ended, the Israelites need not consume the donkeys as they did in 6:25. The first action taken by the outcasts upon entering the camp is to eat and drink (7:8). They then proceed to save Samaria: thus, ironically, the kingdom is not saved by its king but by unclean outcasts.

The conclusion of the episode returns to the framework of the connection between divine blessing and low-priced food. First there appear financial equations regarding food prices: 1 seah flour = 1 shekel, 2 seahs barley = 1 shekel (7:16, 18); and then the reference to windows in the heavens is repeated (v. 19).

The basic connections between divine provision and feasting undergird the regular annual pilgrimage feasts. Based in this ritual world, the narrative complex of 2 Kings 6–7 combines famine, provision, and feasting threads into a complex treatment of the connection between divine power and the human representatives of the divine, who are allowed to access this power for the provision of food,

92. *KTU* 1:4 VII 17–52; cf. Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (2 vols.; VTSup 114; Leiden: Brill, 1994–2009) 2:580, 604, 607, for a concise overview and biblical parallels.

93. The irony that deliverance comes not through the divine windows (*ʾarubôt*, v. 2) but through four (*ʾarbāʿâ*) lepers has been noted by LaBarbera, "The Man of War," 648.

hospitality, and feasting. The threat of foreign invasion underlines one important role that the monarch was expected to fill, while the prophet, king, and people (in Deuteronomy 8, 26) are called upon to honor Yahweh's role as provider in the past, in part to ensure continued provision in the present and the future.

5. Conclusion

This essay has combined a series of approaches to offer an introductory study of the ubiquity, importance, and differentiated nature of famine and food shortage in the Hebrew Bible and its ancient Near Eastern context. Paleopathological investigations of skeletal remains for Syria–Palestine and the broader ancient world are in limited supply. The juxtaposition of biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts and iconography with evidence from Classical and Late Antiquity on the one hand and the results of modern medical and sociological studies of food shortage and its difficult circumstances on the other hand form a backdrop for understanding food supply in ancient Israel and Judah.

Shortages and famine can be envisioned as existing on a continuum and as an image with which almost every ancient Near Eastern generation was at least somewhat familiar. Shortages arose as a result of combined climatic and social factors, often coinciding with disease and war. Depictions of famine and food shortage appear frequently in the literary worlds of the biblical texts, as do a variety of human responses to these situations, especially their expectations that the ruler would provide for his hungry subjects.

On this backdrop of shortage, feasting is cast in a different light. The basic connection between divine blessing and agricultural plenty is underlined, while the expected nexus between royal and divine provision often comes under negotiation, as displayed in 2 Kings 6–7. Considerations of hospitality banquets have also been mentioned here, though this topic largely remains open for future exploration. Famine, food shortages, and the threat of desperation lavish on us additional levels of meaning when understood in contrast to feasts.

Feasting and Everyday Meals in the World of the Hebrew Bible

The Relationship Reexamined through Material Culture and Texts

Leann Pace

In foodways discourse,[1] a divide exists between the study of special types of consumption events (for example, feasts) and the study of more-everyday food-related practices (home-based eating and drinking). Even a casual consumer of scholarship related to foodways theory would note two meaningful trends in this regard: (1) a great deal is written on the practice of feasting in comparison with scholarship concerned with everyday eating practices; (2) in addition to this imbalance, the two topics are rarely treated together. While one could argue that these sorts of division in individual works of scholarship simply reflect decisions about the scope necessary to keep research projects manageable and digestible, I posit that scholars as a whole are creating a risky situation, in which researchers begin to believe that these divisions, helpful for study and publication purposes, actually represent the way that ancient peoples conceptualized consumption practices.

The real danger lies in two particular correlate statements suggested by these research and publication patterns: (1) feasting/banqueting is more important to our understanding of human behavior, social organization, and culture than everyday eating practices; (2) the relationship between feasting and everyday eating practices is unclear, unimportant, or nonexistent.[2] However, further

1. Generally stated, foodways scholars focus on what food and drink people consume and how and when they go about consuming these items.

2. Susan Pollock has recently produced a "must-read" chapter that concisely but thoroughly discusses the divide between the study of everyday meals and the study of feasts in scholarship ("Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces: An Introduction," *eTopoi Journal for Ancient Studies* Special Volume 2 [*Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Space*; 2012] 1–20). See also Yannis Hamilakis, "Food Technologies/Technologies of the

examination of the processes by which the food-related habitus is constructed reveals that all types of food-consumption events are intimately related and, more to the point, that everyday eating practices provide the foundation on which special consumption events, such as feasts, are built.[3] As Susan Pollock succinctly states, "Without the ordinary, it is impossible for something to be extraordinary."[4]

J. Fu and P. Altmann's introduction to this volume has highlighted the close relationship between individual households and higher-level community structures (tribe and monarchy) in the world of the Hebrew Bible, as exemplified in the work of L. Stager and J. D. Schloen.[5] There is general acceptance of the inherent relationship in the ancient Near Eastern world between "nodes"[6] of society and, likewise, the relationship between (1) everyday eating practices that occur in the household node and (2) more-public, seemingly

Body: The Social Context of Wine and Oil Production and Consumption in Bronze Age Crete," *World Archaeology* 31 (1999) 38–54 (here, p. 40).

3. The concept of *habitus* comes from the scholarly works of Pierre Bourdieu. He defined it is as

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being products of the obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operation necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of the conductor. (Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972] 72)

Without doing too much violence to the nuances of Bourdieu's concept, I suggest that dispositions could be understood as attitudes toward certain aspects of life. When dispositions are commonly held within a community, they create structures by which individuals in the community "are able to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" on a day-to-day basis (ibid., 72). Over time, certain practices become second nature and, as children mature, they learn these "second nature" dispositions from everyday interactions within their households and larger communities; thus cultural norms are transmitted from one generation to the next. These dispositions are by no means "mechanical" but instead create "regulated improvisations," with individual practices representing variations on a collective habitus (ibid., 79, 218 n. 47).

4. Pollock, "Between Feasts," 6.

5. Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985) 1–35; and J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (SAHL 2; Winona Lake, IN: Harvard Semitic Museum and Eisenbrauns, 2001).

6. Janling Fu and Peter Altmann, "Feasting: Backgrounds, Theoretical Perspectives, and Introductions" (in this volume), p. 20.

more-ritualized commensal behaviors that occur in nodes outside the household. However, this knowledge does not seem explicitly to have shaped the way in which researchers talk about "commensal politics" in the ancient Levant.[7] This relationship between consumption events occurring at various levels of social structure is probably one of which many scholars are keenly aware, but it has rarely been a key focus of foodways research generally and even less often in studies focused on material from the ancient Near East.

However, an explicit treatment of this relationship in excavated material and the textual corpus from the world of the Hebrew Bible allows the most basic components of a first-millennium Levantine meal to be identified, encouraging new consideration of the feast and thereby revealing that each out-of-the-ordinary meal is composed of a chosen set of amplifications and manipulations of the everyday meal. In short, the basic components of the everyday meal are the most basic semantic units of Iron Age commensal language that must have been understood by all in order for the carefully crafted complexity of the feast to have its desired significance and impact. In this essay, I will provide evidence for identifying the basic building blocks of the first-millennium Levantine meal and illustrate via textual and archaeological case studies how analyzing special meals through the lens of the everyday meal brings into even clearer focus the "commensal politics" at play in the feast and the everyday meal.

1. The Feast and the Everyday Meal: A Review of Literature and a Proposal

While connections between the everyday meal and the feast are acknowledged and noted in foodways scholarship, this relationship is rarely the focus of scholarly writing. For example, in a tantalizing statement at the end of his 1981 exploration of gastro-politics in southeastern Asia, A. Appadurai affirms the dialectical or dialogue-like nature of various types of consumption events in the life of an individual and community. At the end of his consideration of the semiotics of eating events in a domestic context, a ritual context, and a wedding celebration, he writes:

7. Michael Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast: Rituals of Consumption, Commensal Politics, and Power in African Contexts," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 65–114 (here, p. 66).

> Thus, whenever food is exchanged in one domain, it carries some of the meanings of its roles in other domains. Food transactions within the household acquire some of the public force of the marriage feast and some of the cosmological implications of the worship; the marriage feast acquires some of the testy intimacy of the domestic meal and some of the collective solemnity of temple worship; and ceremonial food transactions in temples acquire some of the emotional force of the domestic hearth and some of the ethos of alliance of the marriage feast.[8]

Appadurai's observation suggests that domestic meals and feasts both express their own ethos and are ritually marked in their own distinct ways and that the unique character of each is reflected (and possibly reinterpreted) in other commensal settings. One is left wishing that Appadurai had written a follow-up article detailing the mechanics of these relationships that he so briefly discusses in his concluding remarks.

Likewise, in the highly influential volume on feasting that M. Dietler co-edited with B. Hayden, Dietler writes that a "complex semiotic relationship" exists between feasts and everyday eating practices and that "this relationship between feasts and daily meals is crucial both to understanding the symbolic significance of feasts and to our very ability to identify feasting archaeologically."[9]

If the importance of this relationship has been acknowledged, why does it not receive more direct study? Some scholars may be concerned that a focus on shared components of the everyday meal and feast could muddle the clarity of the term *feast*, thus rendering it less useful as the description of a particular set of behaviors. One example of this concern is voiced in the introduction to the aforementioned collection of essays. Dietler and Hayden write:

> Most authors are also explicit in differentiating such food-consumption events [feasts] from both everyday domestic meals and from the simple exchange of food without communal consumption. These are important distinctions to maintain if the category is to have analytical utility. To the extent that one begins to conflate feasts with the general exchange of food or with the other kinds of transactions for which feasts may serve as a context, one precludes both understanding feasts as a specific social practice and understanding the important semiotic and functional relationships between feasts and these other kinds of practice.[10]

8. Arjun Appadurai, "Gastro-politics in Hindu South Asia," *American Ethnologist* 8 (1981) 494–511 (here, p. 509).

9. Dietler, "Theorizing the Feast," 69–70.

10. Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, "Digesting the Feast: Good to Eat, Good to Drink, Good to Think," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Per-*

While I agree in principle that a feast (in a modern example, a State Dinner at the White House) is different in some very important and fundamental ways (for example, fine china, formal dress, presence of foreign dignitaries, number of meal courses served, quality of food served) from meals eaten in private homes across America on any given night, I find it difficult to determine exactly where the dividing line between feasts and mundane meals should lie.[11]

The challenges inherent in separating feasts from other types of consumption events, especially everyday meals, are best exemplified in the ongoing debate over what constitutes a feast. Not surprisingly, the definition of *feast* can vary from scholar to scholar.[12] While there is general agreement that feasts include more people than the average family-group meal, often include special foods (in quality and/or quantity), and have ritualized aspects, no definite, universally agreed-upon criteria exist for identifying a feast. Does one special guest at a weeknight dinner elevate it from meal to feast? Is one special food sufficient? Must there be a publicly visible component to the commensal event? Must several of these hallmarks exist together before a gathering involving food may be called a feast? In the opening

spectives on Food, Politics, and Power (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 1–20 (here, p. 3).

11. I am certainly not the first to make this observation; for example, see Christine Hastorf and Mary Weismantel, "Food: Where Opposites Meet," in *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (ed. K. C. Twiss; Occasional Paper 34; Carbondale, IL: Center for Archaeological Investigations, 2007).

12. Brian Hayden defines *feasting* as "any sharing between two or more people of specialized foods (i.e., foods not generally served at daily meals) in a meal for a special purpose or occasion" ("Fabulous Feasts: A Prolegomenon to the Importance of Feasting," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* [ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001] 23–64 [here, p. 28]). Polly Wiessner lists the following criteria: (1) aggregation of people, (2) food sharing and distribution (3) specific occasion, (4) form of display, (5) abundance ("Of Feasting and Value: Enga Feasts in a Historical Perspective [Papua New Guinea]," in ibid., 115–43 [here, pp. 116–17]). A *feast*, broadly defined, is an event "essentially constituted by the communal consumption of food and/or drink" (Dietler and Hayden, "Digesting the Feast," 3). It is often held in honor of a special occasion or notable event and may feature large amounts of food and drink, the presentation of unusual or luxury food and drink, the use of special eating implements, and the performance of special entertainment or rituals (Hayden, "Fabulous Feasts"). According to Hastorf and Weismantel, feasts often have an "aspect of public gaze if not public participation," characterized by abundance, the use of unusual ingredients, and less-common preparation styles ("Food: Where Opposites Meet," 311–12).

essay of this volume, Fu and Altmann suggest that "feasting differs in degree and kind from the daily intake of meals" and that "the focus on communal consumption sets feasting apart from individual consumption of food."[13] How do we know whether the threshold for a differentiation in degree, kind, and focus has been crossed, moving an eating event into the realm of feast?

The task of distinguishing between everyday meals and feasts is made even more difficult by the variations in size, social structure, ecological environment, and political structure of the multitude of ancient and modern communities under consideration by scholars interested in foodways studies. These inherent differences require that any feasting criteria devised must be quite flexible and adaptable. For example, most scholars seem to agree that a feast must be a communal event, yet what is understood as "communal" varies widely between people groups, especially when we compare modern and ancient case studies.[14] Even if specific criteria for feasting were widely accepted, identifying them within the context of specific communities would remain a challenge.

The subtle nature of some feasting indicators also poses a practical challenge to investigators seeking to locate feasting (as opposed to other types of consumption events) in archaeological contexts. A single variation in one category of practice related to everyday meals (number of people, abundance of food, serving style employed) could, in the minds of the participants, have transformed a family meal into a kin-group feast. In many cases, the evidence necessary to identify a single feasting event may not be distinguishable from the larger body of data related to everyday eating events. For example, archaeologists must excavate middens and refuse pits with care, looking for strata within the pit that might indicate the order and time period of deposits. Without careful examination, it is very difficult to determine whether all of the food-related refuse in a pit belonged to a single household over a number of years or represented

13. See Fu and Altmann, "Feasting: Backgrounds, Theoritical Perspectives, and Introductions," p. 15 in this volume.

14. In a small village setting, a communal feast could involve nearly every member of the community whereas, in a larger urban setting, many different communities might exist within the larger city structure. Thus, in an urban setting, a communal feast might consist of all the members of a kin-group; at the same time, a city-wide event to celebrate a large building project could include a communal feast. Even within the context of an ancient city, different levels of "community" and communal feasts would exist.

a single consumption event, possibly a feast, in which a great deal of food-related garbage was produced. Further complicating the matter, as M. Douglas points out, is the fact that special consumption events may not have been marked by changes in food preparation or consumption but instead by "standard gifts of flowers or sung calypsos or memorial recitations of verse," all of which are practices that are probably invisible in the archaeological record.[15]

The preceding pages describe the tension that appears in scholarship between the feast and the everyday meal; scholars whose works are germinal to feasting and foodways studies acknowledge a meaningful relationship between these consumption practices, yet there is little published to explore this relationship. The task is no easier for those who wish to explore only feasting or everyday eating because, in the area of practice where these two meet, the dividing line is intangible. How can a researcher develop a model for discussing the relationship between everyday eating events and feasts that recognizes their interrelatedness while still recognizing and exploring important differences? Perhaps an answer lies in an approach that does not seek to dichotomize these behaviors but, as Stager and Schloen have suggested for understanding the first-millennium Israelite social structure, relies on an investigation of the structuring patterns that undergird consumption practices more generally.

M. Douglas's work provides us with a significant starting point for developing a paradigm for research that does not dichotomize these behaviors. In an essay prompted by her curiosity about what constituted a proper meal in her own home, she noted that meals could vary in complexity over the course of a day or a week—a fact that all modern readers are aware of from their own lives. For example, she observed that "weekday lunches tend to have a tripartite structure, one element stressed accompanied by two or more unstressed elements, for example a main course and cold supporting dishes."[16] While the Sunday lunch was much more elaborate than

15. Mary Douglas, "Standard Social Uses of Food: Introduction," in *Food in the Social Order: Studies of Food and Festivities in Three American Communities* (ed. M. Douglas; New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984) 1–39 (here, p. 20).

16. Idem, "Deciphering a Meal," in *Food and Culture: A Reader* (ed. C. Counihan and P. Van Esterik; New York: Routledge, 1997) 36–54 (here, p. 41). Other scholars working with ancient Near Eastern material have engaged with Douglas's ideas, largely focusing on her work related to food prohibitions in the Hebrew Bible. For one broader engagement with her work, see Nathan MacDonald, *Not by Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 17–43.

other lunches during the week in her home, an examination of its components revealed it to be simply a more complex version of the weekday lunch that featured two sets of the tripartite structure or multiple courses.[17]

Likewise, a Christmas dinner or birthday dinner would feature even more iterations of the tripartite structure. Summing up her findings about weekly and yearly meal structures, she writes,

> The smallest, meanest meal metonymically figures the structure of the grandest, and each unit of the grand meal figures again the whole meal—or the meanest meal. . . . As to the social dimension, admission to even the simplest meal incorporates our guest unwittingly into the pattern of solid Sunday dinner, Christmases, and the gamut of life-cycle celebrations.[18]

Her work implies that special meals (for example, Christmas dinner) are recognizable as special because of the additional number of iterations of the tripartite meal structure presented to the diners. Without knowledge of what the everyday meal comprises, the specialness of the Christmas meal would be obscured. While the specifics of the tripartite English meal may not be directly relevant to consumption studies focused on the ancient Near East, the theoretical principle that underlies it is applicable. The principle at the heart of Douglas's study is this: special meals are simply more complex variations of the everyday meal structure and are particularly recognizable in comparison with the everyday meal structure.

C. Hastorf and M. Weismantel add a layer of complexity to the paradigm posited by Douglas. While they describe the relationship between feast and mundane consumption practice as a "nested set of meal types," an outlook nearly identical to Douglas's, they go on to suggest that "it may be ultimately more fruitful to consider the feast and the quotidian meal as existing in a dialectical relationship."[19] This brings a new liveliness to the model already proposed by acknowledging the "dialogue" that takes place between the varying levels of nested meal types, allowing for some movement and flexibility in a potentially rigid structuralist model.

How can the flexible nature of this relationship be described best? On the one hand, everyday eating events and feasts appear to be in a recursive relationship, with a basic food consumption structure being repeated in various combinations. However, thinking of the relationship as a recursive structure does not capture the reflexive

17. Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," 41–42.
18. Ibid., 42.
19. Hastorf and Weismantel, "Food: Where Opposites Meet," 314 and 316.

nature of the relationship or the importance of manipulations of the basic structure to achieve various social, political, and economic goals. It might be best to think of all eating events in a bounded society as *organic iterations of a basic commensal structure*, thus capturing both the recursive and the reflexive nature of their relationship. The symbolic power of eating events and their inherent value as a means by which social change may be effected rests in the ability of the participants to manipulate this basic structure. Thus, while a standard for the basic building block of a meal may exist in a given culture, one should not expect all eating events to be simple reflections of this structure. Instead, one might think of the various incarnations of this basic structure as riffs on a theme: each of the variations may represent symbolic communication or necessary adjustments due to changes in environmental, economic, social, and political realities.

2. Identifying the Basic Building Blocks of the Iron Age Levantine Meal

Now that an argument has been made for the value of identifying the basic building blocks of a meal, the next task is to attempt this identification. Contrary to the well-known description of Canaan as a land "flowing with milk and honey," textual and archaeological evidence strongly suggest that the most basic and essential components of the Iron Age Levantine diet were the triad of a grain or grain-based product, olive oil, and wine.[20] These components appear together as a triad in a number of places in the Hebrew Bible. The densest concentration of references appears in Deuteronomy, where the triad is mentioned as part of the larger covenantal and relational structure between YHWH and the Israelites. In Deut 7:13 and 11:14, an abundant supply of grain (*dāgān*), wine (*tîrōš*), and oil (*yiṣhār*) is part of the reward for the people of Israel if they uphold their end of the newly minted covenant with YHWH by abiding by the commandments:[21]

20. Readers will notice that, although the word *triad* is used, I will focus on exploring ingredients instead of complete dish types, as Mary Douglas does. Other scholars such as Oded Borowski and Nathan MacDonald have identified and discussed this triad at some length, and I am indebted to their work. See Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008); and Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009).

21. This particular term for wine, *tîrōš*, is often translated "new wine" in order to distinguish it from *yayin*. In the same way that *yiṣhār* represents highest

> If you heed these ordinances, by diligently observing them, the Lord your God will maintain with you the covenant loyalty that he swore to your ancestors; he will love you, bless you, and multiply you; he will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain, and your wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock, in the land that he swore to your ancestors to give you. (Deut 7:12–13, NRSV)
>
> If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today—loving the Lord your God and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul—then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill. (Deut 11:13–14, NRSV)

The Arad Ostraca, which were excavated from the Negev border fortress site and date to the end of the seventh century or very beginning of the sixth century B.C.E., also attest the importance of grain-based products, wine, and oil to Iron Age residents of the Levant.[22] Ostraca 1–18 are either addressed to or make reference to a man named Eliashib, who probably served as a commander or quartermaster at the site. Most of these 18 ostraca are directives to Eliashab to distribute some combination of grain, flour (*qmḥ*), bread (*lḥm*), oil (*šmn*), and wine (*yyn*) to various groups and individuals. Eight of the directives involve the distribution of these goods to Kittim, who were probably Aegean mercenaries serving at the fortress. No one directive includes all three items in the triad; however, this should not be surprising. If these ostraca represent the disbursement of essential rations to soldiers and/or individuals associated with the fortress, then one should expect each commodity to be resupplied on varying schedules. Certainly bread and flour, because of the rate of consumption and risk of spoilage, would need to be supplied on a more frequent basis than olive oil, which was probably used more slowly and could be delivered in larger individual quantities, due to its long-term storage potential. What is significant about the ostraca in relation to this project is that the three items in the triad (and derivative products, such as bread) are the only goods listed in this directive, signaling that these goods were considered essential fare.[23]

quality oil, likely from the first pressing, *tîrōš* should be understood to represent the finest wine.

22. In this study, I have used the edition of the Arad Letters and Samaria Ostraca published in F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp et al., *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

23. The notion of *rations* is a bit complicated because those receiving rations may have had access to other food sources. Thus, it is difficult to deter-

The notion of the triad as essential rations at Iron Age Arad is strengthened by the appearance of the three foods as rations in a very different context: for the temple personnel in Jerusalem. In 2 Chr 31:5, grain (*dāgān*), wine (*tîrôš*), and oil (*yiṣhār*) appear as part of the tithe brought by the people to the newly purified temple by order of Hezekiah. At the end of the period of gathering tithes, Azariah, the chief priest, declares the tithes to be more than adequate to feed the temple personnel (2 Chr 31:10). Grain, wine, and oil are mentioned also in the context of Nehemiah's reinstitution of cultic activity in the temple in Jerusalem. Neh 13:4–12 details Nehemiah's discovery that Eliashib, the priest in charge of the storerooms in the temple, has been mismanaging the storeroom space as well as the goods meant to be stockpiled in the storeroom. In fact, many of the Levites had abandoned their service in the temple and "returned to their fields" because they had not been given the promised "portions." The remedy to this problem, once discovered, was to have the people of Judah bring tithes of "grain, wine, and oil" (Neh 13:12), implying that these are the supplies necessary to fill the lacking portions for the Levites. The notion that Levites in service at the temple must return to their own lands to eat implies that this portion was not a symbolic ration but the portion on which temple personnel depended for food.[24]

In the textual evidence cited above in support of the triad as the backbone of the first-millennium B.C.E. Levantine diet, much of the material referenced is in the context of covenant and cult. In fact, more-specialized terms, possibly indicating differences in quality or production are used for these commodities when mentioned in a covenantal or cultic context. One might contend that wine, oil, and grain-based products are simply symbolic of the agricultural wealth and abundance or even crops that might be traded, severing the link between the triad and everyday food practices. However, even if references to the triad are meant to be symbolic of overall agricultural abundance, the power of the symbol relies heavily on the hearer's

mine diet simply from ration notations. However, the continued distribution of these three goods to the Kittim underscores their importance and supports the view that these items were meal essentials, a proposal based on strong textual evidence. The Samaria Ostraca also frequently mention oil and wine but not grain. However, the brevity of the notations on many of the ostraca makes understanding the larger transactional system that is represented by these notes rather difficult.

24. See Marty Stevens, *Temples, Tithes, and Taxes: The Temple and the Economic Life of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006) 69–70.

knowledge of the essential nature of these items. The symbolic force of the statements in Deuteronomy 7 and 11 is founded in a cultural belief (perhaps even a habitus) that bread, oil, and wine were necessary components of a simple "good life" and a good meal.[25]

Archaeological evidence also strongly supports the essential role of these commodities. The abundant presence of netherstones or grinding slabs and handstones at Iron Age sites highlights the importance of grain processing in the lives of residents of the ancient Levant.[26] The presence of a grinding slab and handstone in association with many individual houses and groupings of houses suggests that grain processing often took place at the household level and was an important part of the rhythm of household life. As with grain, the many grape- and olive-processing facilities in the Levant speak to the importance of wine and oil. R. Frankel has estimated that "the total number [of simple rock-cut treading installations] in the area of the Israel–Palestine Grid probably reaches tens of thousands."[27] Although Frankel's work highlights the many examples of pressing and processing sites, Iron Age grape-processing installations are known from Tel Michal, Gibeon, Tell Qasile, Ashkelon, and Jaffa.[28]

25. A few other instances in which the triad symbolizes simple abundance and covenant are Jer 31:12; Hos 2:8, 22; and Joel 1:10; 2:19, 23–24.

26. For a more detailed discussion of domestic grinding installations and their relationship to domestic architecture, see Jennie R. Ebeling and Yorke M. Rowan, "Archaeology of the Daily Grind: Ground Stone Tools and Food Production in the Southern Levant," *NEA* 67 (2004) 108–17; and Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013) especially pp. 59–116.

27. Rafael Frankel, *Wine and Oil Production in Antiquity in Israel and Other Mediterranean Countries* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 51. The many installations are from a variety of periods but speak to the long-term importance of wine and oil in the region.

28. Ze'ev Herzog, George Rapp Jr., and Ora Negbi, *Excavations at Tel Michal, Israel* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) 73–75; James Pritchard, "The Wine Industry at Gibeon: 1959 Discoveries," *Expedition* 2 (1959) 17–25; Raphael Frankel and Etan Ayalon, *Vines, Winepresses and Wine in Ancient Times* (Tel Aviv: Eretz Israel/Israel Museum, 1989) [Hebrew]; Lawrence Stager, Daniel Master, and David Schloen, "The Winery in Grid 38," *Ashkelon 3: The Seventh Century* B.C. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) 13–30; Alexander Fantalkin, "A Group of Iron Age Wineries from Ancient Jaffa (Joppa)," *Salvage Excavation Reports* 2 (2005) 3–26. More generally, see also Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (HSM 60; Winona Lake, IN: Harvard Semitic Museum/Eisenbrauns, 2000).

Examples of olive-pressing and oil-collecting installations are equally numerous, such as those from Iron Age Tell Beit Mirsim.[29]

3. How Were These Items Consumed?

Evidence for the consumption of grain products and wine is abundant. The grain component of the triad occurred most often in the form of a bread or cake but also could have been consumed in porridge or simply parched.[30] Based on evidence from the Hebrew Bible and the Arad and Samaria Ostraca, wine was a very popular beverage.[31] It is not clear whether ancient Israelites would have consumed their wine in the fashion of the Greek symposion, diluted with some water and possibly mixed with other spicing agents.[32]

Despite the frequent mention of olive oil alongside grain and wine, the extent of its use as a foodstuff is not well understood.[33] Oil is mentioned in both the Arad and Samaria Ostraca, sometimes in fairly significant quantities, but is rarely mentioned in the Hebrew Bible in the context of a consumed meal (for example, Exod 29:2, 1 Kgs 17:12). Frankel's careful treatment of this subject concludes that "olive oil was a staple product of importance, although probably not available to the poorest part of the population."[34] However, the evidence is further complicated by the account of Elijah and the widow in 1 Kings 17, in which the very poor woman is reported as possessing a small amount of olive oil. I propose that, in cases where olive oil is not explicitly mentioned with descriptions of the consumption of bread or other grain-based products, it may have been

29. Frankel, *Wine and Oil Production*, 62–67.

30. MacDonald, *What Did Ancient Israelites Eat?* 21; and Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*, 87–93.

31. Philip King and Lawrence Stager state that wine is mentioned "185 times" in the Hebrew Bible and "served as the commonly consumed beverage in ancient Israel, since water was so often contaminated" (*Life in Biblical Israel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 103).

32. Isa 1:22 offers one perspective on the appropriateness of mixing wine and water. The author compares diluted wine with silver that has become dross and a faithful city that has become a prostitute. At least in the opinion of the author of Isaiah 1, "choice wine" is not meant to be diluted with water. However, a critique of this practice in the context of a judgment against the Judahite Kingdom does not constitute hard evidence about whether the practice of mixing water and wine was common in the Iron Age Levant; it only indicates that the practice would have been widely known.

33. MacDonald, *What Did Ancient Israelites Eat?* 24.

34. Frankel, *Wine and Oil Production*, 45.

present as an ingredient or cooking aid—and in fact was so common that it did not warrant specific mention by the author.[35]

Now, having proposed the basic building blocks for a meal in the world of the Hebrew Bible, I am in a better position to analyze the amplifications, modifications, and/or manipulations of this everyday basic structure that elevate the consumption event from a mundane meal to a feast. These case studies from text and archaeology demonstrate what may be gained by viewing the feast through the lens of the everyday meal—namely, how an understanding of the basic ideas of meal construction aids the understanding of the politics of feasting in the first-millennium Levant.

4. Variations on Basic Meal Structure in the Hebrew Bible

Probably the most common amplification of this triad is the addition of meat. The inclusion of meat was special but "not necessarily a rare occasion."[36] Faunal remains from Iron Age sites throughout the Levant as well as accounts from the Hebrew Bible attest the robust presence of domesticated livestock. Despite this access to meat, people did not consume it at every meal (see, for example, Gen 25:29, where Jacob prepares lentil stew). Iron Age Levantine meat-consumption strategies were probably based on a careful analysis of how best to balance the products and services offered by domesticated animals. Animals were raised not only for their flesh but also for their secondary products (milk and wool) or for their potential use as draft animals.[37] When animals were killed, their slaughter often occurred on a time schedule that balanced the meat that would be obtained (meat from mature, weaned animals) with the cost of continuing to feed them past maturity.[38] Additionally, the slaughter of an entire animal for an everyday meal would probably have left a great deal of the flesh unused and in danger of rotting. The leftover meat would need to be shared, preserved, or sold, which would have resulted in additional work for the family.[39] Meat, while not particularly rare in the Iron Age Levantine diet, represented a thoughtful

35. Oded Borowski, "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry," *NEA* 67 (2004) 96–107 (here, p. 104).

36. Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 107.

37. Oded Borowski, *Every Living Thing: Daily Use of Animals in Ancient Israel* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 1998) 57.

38. Ibid., 57–58, 231.

39. Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 107.

calculation of the economic cost of the slaughter—a balancing of economic cost versus possible social capital (such as gained through hospitality).[40]

In Genesis, meals figure prominently in the ongoing animosity between Isaac's sons, Esau and Jacob (chaps. 25 and 27). In Genesis 27, a special meal serves as part of a larger blessing ritual and provides the setting and means for Jacob to "steal" the blessing meant to be given by Isaac to Esau. The centerpiece of this meal is a "savory meat dish" (*maṭʿammîm*; v. 4), which Isaac asks Esau to prepare from game that he must first hunt and kill. However, Rebekah and Jacob circumvent Isaac's wishes by slaughtering goats from their own flock to make the dish that he requests. Isaac eats his meat dish with bread and wine, and the blessing afforded to Jacob specifically cites an abundance of grain and wine (Gen 27:25–29). Although specific mention of oil is missing from this text, oil may have been used in the cooking of the meat dish and/or in the baking of the bread.[41]

In this episode, why is there an augmentation of the basic meal unit through the inclusion of meat? The wild game represents a special treat for Isaac. His age and poor eyesight make him unable to hunt for himself. Isaac relies on Esau to procure wild meat, allowing him to eat a favorite meal in conjunction with the giving of his blessing to Esau.[42] The requested wild game represents a different expenditure of energy and resources than the slaughtering of a domestic goat, and its presence would have marked the meal as set apart, an appropriate setting for Isaac to give Esau, his older son, a formal blessing before he dies. Thus, the meal provides a stage for the

40. For a discussion of the symbolic value of meat in the Hebrew Bible, see Peter Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel: Deuteronomy's Identity Politics in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context* (BZAW 424; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011) 72–78.

41. While it might be tempting to propose that the missing oil is the result of the complicated compositional history of this material, such a perspective is unnecessary for the point being made here. If anything, the story's retention of the basic meal structure, even across textual layers, further reinforces our sense that this motif is a fundamental component of its cultural milieu.

42. Some commentators have faulted Isaac for his focus on food in this story, suggesting that his appetite may have clouded his judgment, allowed the deception to take place, and caused the animosity between the brothers to increase. For example, Dennis Sylva, "The Blessing of the Wounded Patriarch: Genesis 27:1–40," *JSOT* 32 (2008) 267–86. However, food may have been an expected or, at least, not unusual part of relational rituals such as blessings—for example, Melchizedek's offering of wine and bread to Abram in Gen 14:18. See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981) 205 and 440.

passing of authority and a wish for abundance in order for the family to continue. The fact that Rebekah and Jacob scheme to disrupt the planned event demonstrates the importance of the meal itself and the blessing that was to take place in conjunction with the meal.

Abigail's peace offering of food to David and his men, detailed in 1 Sam 25:18, provides a more pronounced example of augmentation. Abigail's husband, Nabal, refuses to provision David's men, despite the fact that they have provided some security to his shepherds and herds earlier in the year.[43] After her husband refuses the request from David's messenger for food, Abigail brings an array of foodstuffs that are extravagant in both quantity and quality to David, who is already on the march to attack Nabal's household. The original request from David in v. 8 seems to ask for whatever can be spared at the festive time of sheep shearing. However, Abigail sends to David and his men bread, wine, roasted grain, dressed sheep, raisin cakes, and fig cakes—probably far more than what was expected.

Why does the augmentation take place in this story? Abigail's extraordinary gift is meant to counteract Nabal's extraordinary breach of hospitality. Her actions are salvific for the men of her household, since David was leading his men to decimate them, before he received her gift of food. The order in which the foodstuffs are listed in v. 18 is important: the basics are listed first, the bread and the wine. Everything beyond these two items in the list goes beyond the everyday meal; the audience was expecting the basic items to be listed but would have been impressed as the list continued with ever-increasing levels of sumptuousness. Abundance is not only expressed via a variety of foodstuffs but by the fact that not one but two types of grain-based products are offered.[44]

One last textual example uses an abbreviated version of the basic meal to communicate the desperate nature of a widow's financial situation. In 1 Kings 17, Elijah is instructed to ask a widow for food. She informs him that she has only a bit of flour and oil in her home, and she is about to prepare a meal with it to feed herself and her son. She indicates that it will be their last meal, after which they will starve. Elijah entreats her to make a small cake of bread for him as

43. For a summary discussion of David's and his men's service as a possible "protection racket" for which food as payment was expected, see Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008) 261–62.

44. Bodner refers to her gifts to David and his men as "luxurious" (ibid., 264). David Tsumura compares Abigail's gift with a ration list from Papyrus Anastasi I (*The First Book of Samuel* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007] 583–84).

well as what she plans to make for herself and son. If she is willing to make this sacrifice, her resources will be miraculously extended with self-replenishing supplies of flour and oil.

In this story, the economic fragility of this household is exemplified by its lack of resources for the most basic meal. They have inadequate amounts of grain products and oil to sustain themselves beyond the day, and they lack wine completely. Of this episode, W. Brueggemann writes, "Elijah enacts a wonder whereby the widow is included back in the world of Yahweh's abundance."[45] However, an analysis of this passage with the triad in mind exposes the fact that, despite facilitating a miraculous extension of the widow's supply of flour and oil, Elijah does not provide her with the complete triad, because wine is still absent. While she and her household continue to survive with the oil and flour, they are not elevated beyond their abject poverty, as symbolized by the continuing lack of wine and thus an incomplete meal triad.[46]

5. An Archaeological Case Study: Wine Consumption at Ramat Rahel and Er-Ras

A consideration of the relationship between the elements of a basic meal and of the way that everyday consumption and feasts are related through these basic building blocks is also instructive in evaluating archaeological material. The abundant ceramic remains from nearly every archaeological site in the Levant provide important information about the ways in which the people who made and used these ceramic containers procured, stored, cooked, and served their food. Often ceramic studies from archaeological sites feature lists of parallels to vessel forms, production, and decorations from other sites in the region. This information is meant to provide the reader with a sense of how a particular type of ceramic may relate to a larger cultural complex in the region or may imply some connection (economic, political, social) between sites at which a certain ceramic vessel type is found. However, thinking about the relationship

45. Walter Brueggemann, *1 and 2 Kings* (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2000) 210.

46. The lack of wine could be attributed to the drought conditions in the region (see 1 Kgs 17:1), but this does not change the fact that the widow and her household are not enjoying complete abundance. Furthermore, 2 Kgs 4:1–7 relates a similar story, this time featuring the prophet Elisha. In this episode, the widow only has oil, and the oil is not used as a food supply but is miraculously multiplied so that she can sell it for money.

between the consumption of food and the ceramics that were probably associated with the food could encourage scholars to explore more directly the ways in which vessels were used at each site and how these uses at various sites might relate to one another.[47]

An investigation of the vessels that were probably associated with wine consumption from Iron II horizons at the sites of Ramat Rahel and Er-Ras provides interesting comparative material for thinking about the role of wine consumption in feasting and everyday contexts. The most recent excavations at Ramat Rahel have identified two caches of ceramic vessels, one from Aharoni's excavation (Locus 447) and one from the more recent expedition (Locus 14109). They feature a high concentration of forms that have been interpreted as relating to drinking: mostly small, open, slipped and burnished bowls.[48] Both groups of ceramics seem to have been intentionally placed together beneath Iron Age floors. Of these two assemblages that the excavators see as related in some way, they write:

> The vessels that make up the assemblages lead us to conclude that the assemblages are not domestic in nature. Their location in burials below the floors, the style of the vessels, and the fact that most of the vessels (small, open bowls and jugs) are part of a drinking set suggest that the caches are evidence of a symbolically charged performance. It could be political, such as a feast . . . or cultic, such as foundation deposits.[49]

In this short description of the caches and their possible functions, the ceramics are first described as "not domestic."

The authors are right to suggest that some event or practice other than basic beverage consumption is likely represented by these collections of vessels. However, the immediate jump to disconnect these vessels from domestic assemblages and everyday practice limits the types of questions one might ask about the assemblage, discouraging lines of inquiry that might attempt to understand these vessels in light of other vessels that are similar in form but are from more-"domestic" or everyday contexts.

A potentially illuminating parallel that might otherwise be undervalued or overlooked entirely exists in the ceramics from the farmstead site of Er-Ras, just southwest of Jerusalem's Old City. The Iron Age horizon at the site features a concentration of bowls (99 sherds

47. Note the steps taken in this direction by Jodi Magness, "Conspicuous Consumption," in this volume.

48. Oded Lipschits et al., "Palace and Village, Paradise and Oblivion: Unraveling the Riddles of Ramat Rahel," *NEA* 74 (2011) 2–49 (here, p. 14).

49. Ibid.

and 4 complete), kraters, and jugs, which appear from published photos and drawings to be similar in basic form and size to those from Ramat Rahel. The association of some vessels with wine consumption at the site is strengthened by the presence of a rock-cut wine press at the site, which appears to have been in use during the Iron Age.[50]

What might one gain from adopting a research model that does not dichotomize "domestic" and "feast" but instead seeks to determine whether a common use or uses existed for the bowls and jugs at both sites? A resulting research question might be: Are the behaviors represented by the vessel caches at Ramat Rahel an amplification of the basic wine-consumption practices represented by the material at Er-Ras? The authors have identified the ceramic material at Ramat Rahel as representing specialized, possibly ritualized drinking behaviors; but by widening the scope of inquiry to include domestic drinking practices, one can identify a new complex of questions that may bring the activity at Ramat Rahel into sharper focus. For example, assuming that the Er-Ras evidence represents something closer to "normative" everyday consumption practice, what amplification or modification of standard meal practice is evident at Ramat Rahel, and what significance might these changes hold?[51] With regard to the intentional burial of both caches, what significance does this modification to the everyday end-of-meal procedure seek to achieve? At its best, rather than undermining or muddying our understanding of feasting practices, this comparative introduction of evidence from more everyday contexts sharpens the focus on the specific nuances of the feasting activity, not only illuminating the elements that distinguish the feast from the everyday meal, but potentially also revealing important distinctions between one feast and another.

6. Concluding Remarks

The relationship between everyday meals and feasting suggested in this essay—namely, that feasts are simply organic (implying the ability to improvise) iterations of a basic commensal structure represented by the habitus of the everyday meal—provides a framework for analyzing and comparing different types of consumption events in the Iron Age Levant while sidestepping the stymieing issue of

50. Gershon Edelstein, "A Terraced Farm at Er-Ras," *ʿAtiqot* 40 (2000) 39–63.

51. On Er-Ras as an example of normative everyday consumption practices, see Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah*, 92–98.

determining whether a meal represents a feast or not. In fact, this model may contribute to a vernacular understanding of foodways, as opposed to categories of behavior (feast versus everyday meal) that may reflect modern scholarly interests more than those of ancient peoples.

This approach also encourages inquiry about the way that messages concerning group membership (whether in a kin group or a kingdom), power structures, and social capital are communicated at all levels of consumption events. Basic ideological structures, solidified in everyday practice, provide the foundation for other types of social and economic interactions within the larger community. However, everyday consumption practices or more-private consumption practices do not just provide a structure on which more-public or state-related practices rely; the same types of interactions happen in the home and in an elite court setting. For example, a special meal shared between two people can be the setting for an important ritual of solidifying and passing along authority (as between Isaac and Esau/Jacob).[52]

Finally, one application of this model, beyond what can be discussed in this essay, is the relationship between (1) the basic meal unit of grain or grain product, oil, and wine and (2) meals offered and eaten in more-public ritual contexts (such as the temple) in the Hebrew Bible. While food offered to deities is undoubtedly a foodways practice set apart in some key ways, further insight might be gained on the relationship between household-level consumption and temple consumption, between the meal habits of humans and those of the gods.[53] Indeed, this potential extension of the ideas I have proposed in this essay offers a glimpse of their promise for the advancement of the collective treatment and consideration of commensal practices in the Hebrew Bible and across the ancient world.

52. This idea accords nicely with the work of Stager and, more extensively, Schloen on the household in the ancient Levant. They have argued for understanding the larger kingdom as existing on the same model as an individual kin household, just on a larger scale. See specifically Schloen, *The House of the Father*; and Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family."

53. Jonathan Greer's recent publication on sacred feasting at Dan would provide an interesting dialectical partner for an exploration of consumption practices, mundane and sacred (*Dinner at Dan: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sacred Feasts at Iron Age II Tel Dan and Their Significance* [CHANE 66; Leiden: Brill, 2013]).

The Role of the Household in the Religious Feasting of Ancient Israel and Judah

Cynthia Shafer-Elliott

1. Introduction

Historically, Syro-Palestinian archaeology and biblical studies have focused on monumental places, people, material culture, and the texts that reflect them. Major urban settlements with palaces, temples, and fortifications, the elite men who lived and oversaw the administration of the settlement, and the artifacts and texts they left behind have suffered no shortage of analysis. However, a shift of interest to the daily lives of the average ancient Israelite and Judahite has occurred with the adoption of social-scientific methods by historians.[1] These methods emphasize social themes rather than political. Similarly, in anthropological approaches to archaeology, the processual school emphasizes the environmental and cultural factors of a society that contribute to cultural change over time.[2] These shifts

1. For examples, see: Shunya Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel: The Institution of the Family (Beit ʾAb) from the Settlement to the End of the Monarchy* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 7; Jerusalem: Simor, 1996); Marc Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible in Its Social World and Ours* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); Bernhard Lang, ed., *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Thomas E. Levy, ed., *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1998); Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *The Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250–587* B.C.E. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993); Paula McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999); Thomas W. Overholt, *Cultural Anthropology and the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

2. For examples, see: Oded Borowski, *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009); idem, *Daily Life in Biblical Times* (SBLABS 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003); Michele Daviau, *Houses and Their Furnishings in Bronze Age Palestine: Domestic Activity Areas and Artefact Distribution in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages* (JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series 8; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in*

are the consequence of the recognition that, in order to understand the daily life of ancient Israel and Judah, we need to change the focus from monumental to minor, from the macro to the micro.[3] In other words, more attention needs to be given to the stage on which daily life occurred—the home. The home was (and indeed still is) the nucleus of the everyday. The home was where the average ancient Israelite/Judahite man, woman, and child in both urban and rural environments lived out their lives.

The discipline of household archaeology attempts to concentrate on the lived environment and daily activities of the home and its members. An abundance of research into the structure and provenance of the so-called Israelite house has taken place;[4] however, the methodology of household archaeology has only recently been applied to the study of the Israelite/Judahite house, its members, and their activities, including food preparation.[5] While the role of "food" in the official religious and ideological activities of ancient Israel and Judah has been a popular topic of inquiry in both biblical studies and Syro-Palestinian archaeology, a shift of focus to the home allows for a better understanding of the daily life of the average Israelite/Judahite. In this essay, I will explore the nature of religious feasting in domestic contexts within ancient Israel and Judah in both material culture and the Hebrew Bible. The methodology of spatial analysis in household archaeology will be used to examine the material culture of religious-domestic feasting. I will present a brief summary of this methodology followed by a description of one particular household setting from Tel Halif, a multilayered

Context (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Lawrence E. Stager and Philip J. King, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

3. Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 17.

4. Yigal Shiloh, "The Four-Room House: Its Situation and Function in the Israelite City," *IEJ* 20 (1970) 180–90; Frank Braemer, *L'architecture domestique du Levant a l'Age du Fer* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1982); J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (SAHL 2; Winona Lake, IN; Eisenbrauns, 2001); Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich, eds., *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* (Jerusalem; Israel Exploration Society, 1992); and Avraham Faust and Shlomo Bunimovitz, "The Four Room House: Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society," *NEA* 66 (2003) 22–31.

5. Bradley J. Parker and Catherine P. Foster, eds., *New Perspectives on Household Archaeology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012); and Assaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling, and Laura B. Mazow, *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (CHANE 50; Leiden: Brill, 2011).

site near Beer-sheva. Tel Halif was a small fortified town during the eighth century B.C.E., and excavations have uncovered numerous houses from this time period. The house under investigation is characteristic of Iron II Judah and contains a room with evidence of both feasting and religious activities, making the room and its use fruitful for the spatial analysis that follows. This analysis will then provide the data that will serve as a visual aid for further investigation into the nature of religious-domestic feasting and how it is reflected in the Hebrew Bible.

2. Spatial Analysis

Household archaeology can be characterized as the archaeological study of the material dwelling (or house), its members, and their activities through the use of spatial analysis as a means to understand the ancient household. Spatial analysis studies "the way that finds or sites are geographically distributed either in relation to each other or to other features such as terrain. The aim of spatial analysis is to recognize and understand patterns and regularities."[6] In other words, the spatial relationship of the physical environment of the dwelling to the features and artifacts found in the environment is observed and analyzed. Archaeologists depend on these spatial patterns and relationships of the dwelling and its artifacts to manifest activities and, from them, to be able to infer ancient human behavior. According to J. Hardin, spatial data are best preserved by "the careful mapping, recovery and analysis of the dwelling's remains, as well as the rigorous study of all sources introducing variability into the archaeological record [for example, intrusive pits and erosion]."[7] When a dwelling is discovered and excavated, areas dedicated to household activities can be deduced from the archaeological remains by identifying the artifacts, their arrangement, their quantity in a given area, artifact clusters, their location, and their relationship to the dwelling, and other artifacts and artifact clusters. Information regarding the activities and behaviors of the members of the household can be deduced, providing a more comprehensive picture of

6. Timothy Darvill, "Spatial Analysis" in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), http://www.answers.com/library/Archaeology+Dictionary-letter-1S-first-251#ixzz2Ymi198bX [accessed on July 11, 2013].

7. James W. Hardin, "Understanding Domestic Space: An Example from Iron Age Tel Halif," *NEA* 67 (2004) 71–83 (here, p. 74).

the daily life of average ancient men, women, and children.[8] More specifically, concentrating on the artifacts of food consumption and religious activity and the spatial relationship between the two in domestic contexts may foster a better understanding of two important elements of daily life: food and cult.

3. A House at Tel Halif

The F7 dwelling from Tel Halif provides a fruitful example for the spatial analysis of food and cult. Tel Halif is a 7.5-acre mound located on the southwestern side of the Hills of Judah, about 16 km (or 6 mi.) north of Beer-sheva.[9] Archaeological excavations since the 1950s have identified remains ranging from the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age I (strata XIX–XVI, 3500–2900 B.C.E.) through the Roman/Byzantine periods (Stratum III, 200–600 C.E.).[10] In the Iron II stratum (Stratum VIB, ca. 800–700 B.C.E.), substantial fortifications were rebuilt. It was during this time that Tel Halif grew and prospered. Tel Halif was destroyed by the Assyrian campaign against Judah in ca. 701 B.C.E.[11]

Recently, Tel Halif has been the subject of a spatial analysis conducted by J. Hardin, who details the remains of one dwelling (known as the F7 dwelling), their spatial relationship to the dwelling and each other, and the activities that they indicate. The F7 dwelling contained a large assemblage of domestic artifacts: weaving implements, articles of personal adornment, agricultural tools,

8. Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, *Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the Time of the Hebrew Bible* (BibleWorld; Sheffield: Equinox, 2013) 12–14.

9. Joe D. Seger, "Halif, Tel," *NEAEHL* 2:553–61; Paul F. Jacobs, "Taskmaster/Benefactor: (Adjusting to) Digital Media in the Field," *Center for the Study of Architecture/Archaeology Newsletter* 14/1 (2001), http://csanet.org/newsletter/spring01/nis0108.html [accessed January 16, 2014].

10. Archaeological exploration began at Tel Halif in the 1950s, but systematic excavations intensified during the 1970s and were directed by A. Biran and R. Gophna in 1970, R. Gophna in 1972, J. D. Seger in 1972 on behalf of the Hebrew Union College, and D. Alon in 1974 on behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities. More recent excavations began with the establishment of the Lahav Research Project in 1976. The excavations for the Lahav Research Project have been divided into four phases: 1976–80 (phase I), 1983–89 (phase II), and 1992–99 (phase III). Phase IV began in 2007 under the supervision of Oded Borowski from Emory University; see "Cobb Institute Research Activities," http://www.cobb.msstate.edu/Research.html [accessed January 9, 2009].

11. Joe D. Seger, "Lahav," *OEANE* 3:325–26; Oded Borowski, "Tel Halif," *Biblical Interpretation* (2010), http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/halif357921.shtml [accessed January 13, 2014].

seed remains, faunal remains, numerous installations and vessels for food preparation and storage, and cultic paraphernalia.[12] The analysis of this dwelling is of particular interest to the study of religious-domestic feasting because of the types of material cultures found, their findspots, and the actions and behaviors that they imply. This dwelling from the Iron II occupation (Stratum VIB, 800–700 B.C.E.) is located in the northern portion of Halif's Field IV. The house measures approximately 11–12 m (east to west) × approximately 9.5 m (north to south). The outline of the dwelling follows the description of the so-called Four-Room House that is indicative of ancient Israel and Judah during the Iron Age—a back broad room (in this case, divided into two rooms and incorporated into the casemate settlement wall) with three long rooms running perpendicular and often divided by pillars. The floors of the three long rooms were predominantly made of beaten earth, but some floors were made of flagstone and cobblestone, while the floors of the back broad rooms were made of cobblestone. The dwelling's floors, installations, and artifacts were sealed by destruction debris.[13] Hardin's analysis classified the dwelling as having five rooms, each with its own distinctive activity areas; most of the activities pertained to textile production, the preparation of foodstuffs, and long-term and short-term storage of household vessels, food, and drink. There is one room in particular, Room 2, that provides the necessary visual aid of religious-domestic feasting.[14]

4. Room 2

The back broad room of the F7 dwelling at Halif was part of the settlement's fortification system and was divided into two separate rooms, Room 1 and Room 2 (see fig. 1). Room 1 is the smaller of the two (5.4 m^2), and artifacts found on its floor indicate that storage was its primary use. To its south is the larger Room 2 (16.2 m^2) with a cobblestone floor and access to it gained from Room 5 to the east; however, access to Room 2 was partially obstructed by two cooking installations that flanked both sides (L. F7008 and L. G7022). The southwest corner of Room 2 is poorly preserved because of its location on the western slope of the tell and the modern surface

12. James W. Hardin, *Lahav II—Households and the Use of Domestic Space at Iron II Tell Halif: An Archaeology of Destruction* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010) 124. See also my *Food in Ancient Judah*.

13. Hardin, *Lahav II*, 96–98.

14. Ibid., 124–60.

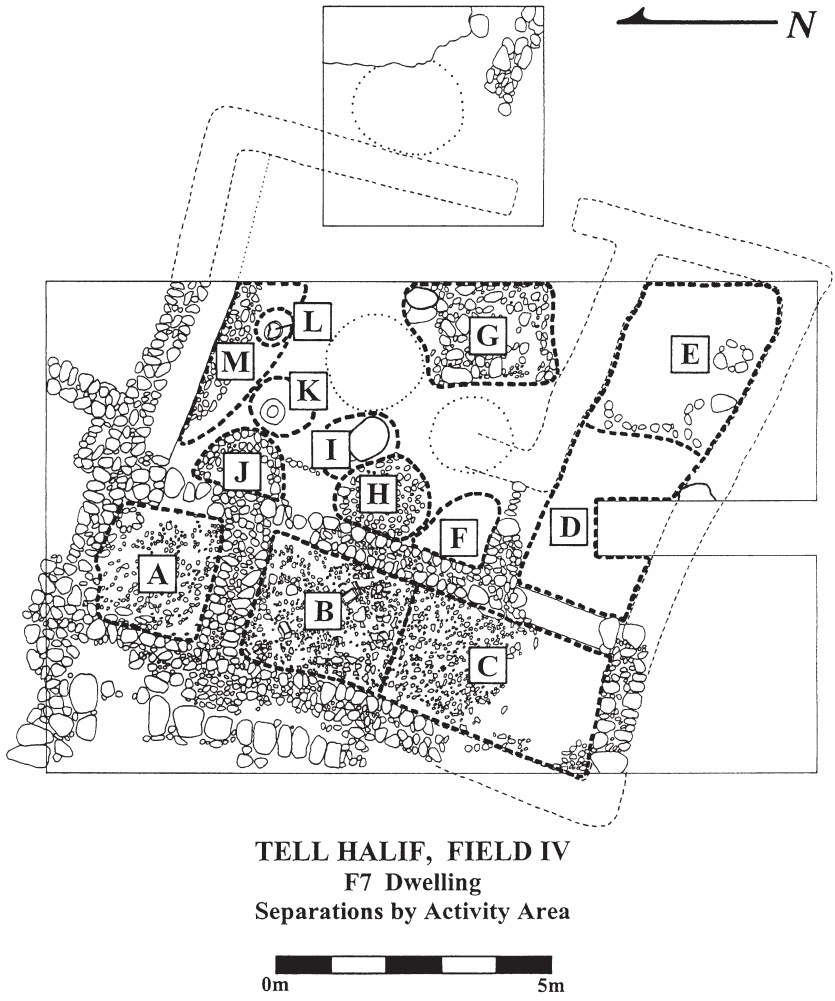

Fig. 1. Spatial analysis top plan of Room 2 in the F7 dwelling at Tel Halif. Reproduced courtesy of Eisenbrauns (after Hardin, *Lahav II*, fig. 5.3).

level; consequently, all the artifacts found were situated solely in the northern one-third of the room. The room was sealed by destruction debris, more than likely the remains of the ceiling and possibly a second floor. Room 2 is the only room without any additional features, such as a *tabun*/*tannur*,[15] hearth, or bin. Artifact types and

15. A *tabun* or *tannur* is an oven. For a discussion on terminology, see my *Food in Ancient Judah*, 119–28.

location suggest that two main activities dominated the use of this room and took place in the activity areas labeled B and C.[16]

Activity Area B, located in the northern portion of the room, measures approximately 2.4 m (E–W) × 2.75 m (N–S) and contains the doorway. Area B contains the largest number and most diverse types of artifacts found in the entire dwelling, which point to food consumption and cultic action.[17] Fragmented ceramic vessels found on the floor include: 3 storage jars, 1 pithos, 3 jugs, 2 cooking pots, 1 handleless krater, 4 straight-sided bowls, 2 juglets, and 1 fenestrated stand with red slip. Additional remains include: 1 bone disk, 1 bone weaving spatula, 1 bovine horn core, 2 small polished stones, 2 pieces of pumice, 2 grinding-stone fragments, some glass slag, 2 standing stones squared with beveled edges, the head of a pillar figurine, 1 flat triangular-shaped stone, 1 polished rectangular stone (possibly a whetstone), 1 broken ceramic spindle whorl, 2 ballistas, and 1 iron arrowhead. Microartifact samples include: grape pips, cereals, legumes, and fish bones and scales. Zooarchaeological remains include (besides the bovine horn core mentioned above): cow (lower molar, calcaneus, and a calf astragalus) and sheep (pelvis fragment and astragalus).[18]

Activity Area C occupied the southern part of Room 2 and measures approximately 2.4 m (E–W) × 4.0 m (N–S). Access to Area C was gained through Area B. Due to site formation processes (such as the site's location on the western slope of the tell and modern surface level), Area C lacks significant material remains, which are limited to 1 small grinding-stone fragment and 1 micro-remain of a beach rock mortar fragment.[19]

Three types of activities can safely be inferred from the material remains found in Room 2: storage, food consumption and possibly some preparation, and religious rituals (see fig. 2). Remains indicating storage include 3 storage jars, 1 pithos, a fenestrated stand, and a variety of other items (for example, grinding stone). In Area B, 8–10 of the 15 ceramic vessels can be connected to the serving and consumption of meals, such as cooking pots, a krater, and bowls. The final activity that occurred in Area B was religious rituals, which are suggested by the following remains: a polished triangular-shaped stone, 2 standing stones squared with beveled edges, the broken

16. Hardin, *Lahav II*, 96, 124, 128–29, 131, 133–43.
17. Ibid., 134.
18. Ibid., 133–43.
19. Ibid., 134.

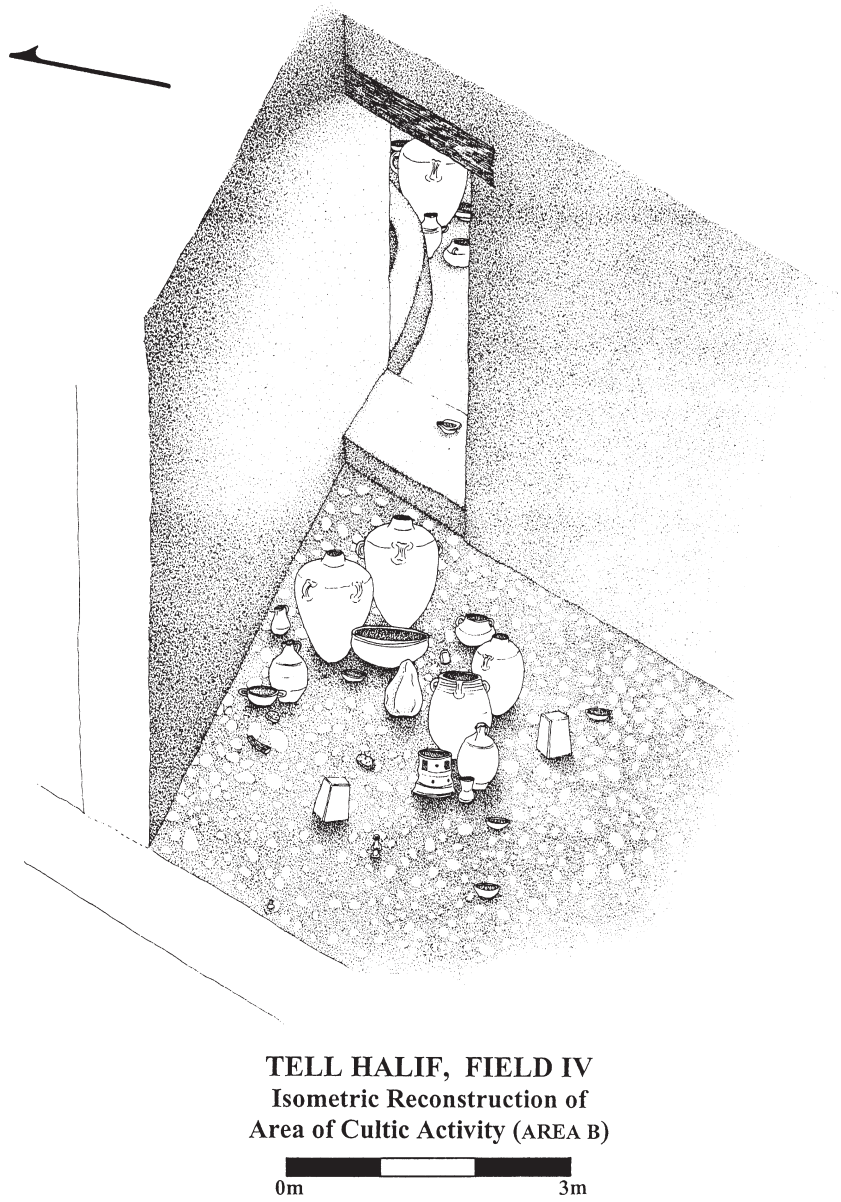

Fig. 2. Spatial top plan of Room 2 in the F7 house at Tel Halif. Reproduced courtesy of Eisenbrauns (after Hardin, *Lahav II*, fig. 5.12).

pillar figurine, and the fenestrated stand.[20] The two activities that have the most bearing on this study are manifested by the artifacts as food consumption and cultic activities. The cooking pots and kraters were often used for the serving and sharing of food. Indeed, ethnographic studies, including studies of various African groups, reveal that traditional societies that share meals together often eat out of large bowls or krater-like bowls.[21] The smaller, straight-sided bowls were also used in the consumption of food.

5. Use of Room 2

While vessels associated with food preparation and consumption are normally found in dwellings, the connection between the F7 house items related to food consumption and the artifacts relating to ritual/religious activities is noteworthy. The importance of this combination of remains can be seen when compared with the analysis of dwellings from Israel and Judah's Iron Age I–Iron Age IIC periods (1200–586 B.C.E.) with possible cultic paraphernalia by R. Albertz and R. Schmitt. They examined the contents of these dwellings and placed them in three categories of objects: (1) Category A includes objects of nonutilitarian use. Some examples are miniature altars and shrines, male and female figurines, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic vessels, model furniture, kernoi, libation vessels, tripod censer cups, stands, amulets, and seals. (2) Category B includes objects that may have had cultic functions, especially when combined with the objects in category A. Items that fit this category are collectibles, luxury and imported pottery, chalices and goblets, small and miniature vessels, lamps, rattles, cosmetic objects, incense bowls or ladles, game pieces, and astragali. (3) Category C includes objects of obvious utilitarian use that could also be used in religious feasting (for example, objects used for food preparation and consumption—cooking installations, pots, bowls, kraters, and jars).[22]

L. Hitchcock, among others, adds that areas where concentrations of these sorts of artifacts are found can be identified as "cult corners," which she defines as "a small area or part of an area in a

20. Ibid., 133–43.

21. Elizabeth H. Hendrickson and Mary McDonald, "Ceramic Form and Function: An Ethnographic Search and an Archaeological Application," *American Anthropologist* 85 (1983) 630–43.

22. Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012) 59–75; see also appendix A.

larger building or courtyard, with or without a bench, and containing ritual objects that could accommodate two to three people."[23] Cult corners can be identified in various contexts, including domestic, and can also be identified by their architectural features, such as: partition walls or niches (to help delineate space), platforms, benches, plastered surfaces, and artifacts in a corner location in a room or courtyard. Examples of these so-called cult corners can be found at Megiddo and Lachish.[24]

Albertz and Schmitt refer to these as large-scale domestic cults or domestic shrines and understand them as one of many typologies of cult places that rightly take into consideration all aspects of cultic location, such as architectural features, evidence of planning, and possible participants. They argue that domestic shrines contain large numbers of distinctively religious artifacts (see the category A list above) and objects for the consumption of ritual meals.[25] Identifying space dedicated to one particular activity can be complicated since dwellings—as well as the dwelling's tools and technology—were multifunctional, and rooms were rarely dedicated to just one activity. It is helpful to keep this in mind when one is identifying activity areas (plural) in a room based on uncovered artifacts.

Albertz and Schmitt analyze 29 dwellings from the Iron Age I; 76% contained both artifacts from category A or B and also objects for the production or consumption of food, with ⅓ of the assemblages clearly belonging to kitchen installations. Likewise, ⅓ of the 19 dwellings from the Iron IIA period contained both category A and category B objects that could be connected to kitchen installations. Quite strikingly, approximately 80% of the 20 Iron IIB dwellings surveyed contained objects used in the preparation and consumption of food, with some appearing to be connected to kitchen installations. From the Iron IIC period, 42 dwellings are analyzed, and over 40% of the cultic objects were related to food preparation, but only 10% were associated with kitchen installations. Their surveys conclude that ritual objects and the activities associated with

23. Louise A. Hitchcock, "Cult Corners in the Aegean and the Levant," in *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (ed. A. Yasur-Landau, J. R. Ebeling, and L. B. Mazow; CHANE 50; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 321–45 (here, p. 321).

24. Ibid., 322; Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001) 214, 248–49, 252–54; King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 341.

25. Albertz and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion*, 227.

them were conducted near kitchen installations or other facilities associated with the preparation and consumption of food.[26]

The F7 dwelling at Tel Halif clearly fits the food and cult pattern observed by Albertz and Schmitt.[27] The majority of the material remains found in the main living quarters of the dwelling (particularly Rooms 3–5) signify typical household activities, such as storage, food preparation, and weaving. However, the spatial analysis of Room 2 suggests that the types of activities that dominated this room were storage, food consumption (and possibly some preparation), and religious rituals. Room 2 was the larger portion of the back broad room, which was separated from the rest of the main living space. Its segregated location implies that some of the activities that occurred there were also seen as separate from and perhaps more significant than the household's daily chores. One might consider Room 2 to be a so-called cult corner, even without the remains of benches or niches, since permanent installations such as these are not the only indicators of religious ritual. Moreover, considering the limited amount of domestic space, it seems unlikely that one room would be fully segregated without other activities taking place in it. In this instance, if the use of Room 2 was segregated, then this could have been validated by its dual use as a storage room.

Contrary to Albertz and Schmitt's proposal, Room 2 did not contain a cooking installation. However, as was mentioned in the spatial analysis of Room 2 above, the entrance to the room was flanked and partially obstructed by two cooking installations in Rooms 4 and 5: L. F7008, a semicircular, possible grinding installation; and G7022, a circular platform, possibly used for food preparation. These installations coupled with (the remains of) a cooking oven (*tabun*/*tannur*) that was very close to the entrance to Room 2 could have been used for the preparation of religious-domestic feasts.[28] Most of the items found in Room 2 were used for food consumption and cultic activities, suggesting that domestic religious rituals and feasting occurred here.

Room 2 contained artifacts that can be classified as Albertz and Schmitt's Category A objects—artifacts, the primary use of which was

26. Ibid., 173–75.

27. For an opposing view, see Michael Press, "A Problem of Definition: 'Cultic' and 'Domestic' Contexts in Philistia," in *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond* (ed. A. Yasur-Landau, J. R. Ebeling, and L. B. Mazow; CHANE 50; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 361–89.

28. Hardin, *Lahav II*, 148–60.

for domestic religious rituals: the polished triangular-shaped stone, the two beveled and dressed standing stones, the broken pillar figurine, and the fenestrated stand. The two beveled and dressed standing stones could have had several functions: as presentation tables, altars, or incense stands. The triangular-shaped stone is somewhat polished and seems to have a natural base, but the surface of the stone is smooth, and there is no indication of grinding or chiseling. P. Jacobs argues that this stone may have been used as a table or platform for cultic activities and food preparation.[29] J. Hardin suggests an alternate proposal, that the triangular-shaped stones is a biblical *maṣṣebâ* (Gen 28:18, 22; Deut 7:5; 1 Kgs 14:23) or standing stone because it is similar to other *maṣṣebot* found at other sites including Arad, Dan, Lachish, Tirzah, and Tell el-ʿUmeiri in Jordan. *Maṣṣebot* are found in single occurrences but more often in groups. Since Room 2 already contained two *maṣṣebot*, it is quite possible that the triangular-shaped standing stone is part of this grouping and could be identified as a *maṣṣebâ*.[30] However, E. Bloch-Smith cautions against the too-easy identification of stones as being *maṣṣebot* and argues that, since there is no physical description of them in the Hebrew Bible, scholars and archaeologists should instead think of stones *functioning* as *maṣṣebot*.[31] Given that the function of a *maṣṣebâ* was to ensure the presence of the household deities, it is reasonable to suggest that the stones found in Room 2 coupled with other

29. Paul Jacobs, "Reading Religious Artifacts: The Shrine Room at Judahite Tell Halif," in ejournal *Journal of Biblical Studies* 1/2 (2001), http://web.archive.org/web/20090124193244/http://journalofbiblicalstudies.org [accessed July 31, 2013].

30. Hardin, *Lahav II*, 138–43. See also Oded Borowski, "Hezekiah's Reforms and the Revolt against Assyria," *BA* 58 (1995) 148–55.

31. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "*Maṣṣebot* in the Israelite Cult: An Argument for Making Implicit Cultic Criteria Explicit," in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel* (ed. J. Day; LHBOTS 422; London: T. & T. Clark, 2007) 28–39 (here, p. 31). Bloch-Smith proposes the following identity markers for *maṣṣebot*: (1) the stone's shape and size—the height exceeds the width; (2) the stones serve no structural function, such as pillars for the house; and (3) the surrounding context and accompanying assemblage support the stone's function as a *maṣṣebâ*. She concludes that the stones in several cultic areas that were previously identified as *maṣṣebot*, including the stones in Room 2 in the F7 house at Halif, would not have functioned as *maṣṣebot* (p. 6). However, it must be noted that part of the argument against the Halif *maṣṣebot* is based on Room 2's being identified as a "shrine" by O. Borowski in "Hezekiah's Reforms and the Revolt against Assyria," 151–52. I do not view Room 2 as a "shrine" but part of the living quarters that functioned, at times, as a place for religious feasting. Consequently, the stones in Room 2 could have served a variety of functions, including religious ritual.

cultic artifacts indicate religious ritual, regardless of the term that the stones are given.

Other items could have been used in religious rituals and can be placed in Categories B and C, such as the handleless krater, cooking pots, jugs, bowls, and a small juglet.[32] Cooking vessels can be categorized in three basic forms for the Iron II: the Late Bronze Age or traditional cooking pot or bowl with triangular rim, the Philistine or Aegean one-handled cooking jug, and the hybrid pot. The common Late Bronze Age bowl-shaped vessel allowed for several types of cooking, including steaming, frying, simmering, and boiling; it would have been useful for cooking larger food items such as meat and for serving larger groups of people.[33]

The small size of Philistine jugs prohibited multiple types of cooking; thus they were most likely used for the simmering of low-heat liquid dishes and smaller portions that were consumed by fewer people.[34] During the end of Iron Age I and into Iron Age II, the Bronze Age pot and Philistine jug forms were merged to create a different type of cooking pot that came to be widely used, known as the hybrid cooking pot. Depending on the type of cooking ware used, the hybrid pot could have been used for rapid, high-temperature cooking as well as for slow, low-heat cooking. The hybrid pot was made in a variety of sizes, which were ideal for small or large foodstuffs, and the number of consumers could fluctuate more easily.[35] Furthermore, cooking pots, kraters, and bowls were often

32. Hardin, *Lahav II*, 139.

33. Anne E. Killebrew, "Late Bronze and Iron I Cooking Pots in Canaan: A Typological, Technological, and Functional Study," in *Archaeology, History and Culture in Palestine and the Near East: Essays in Memory of Albert E. Glock* (ed. T. Kapitan; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999) 87–107 (here, pp. 84, 92–95, 106–9).

34. David Ben-Shlomo et al., "Cooking Identities: Aegean-Style Cooking Jugs and Cultural Interaction in Iron Age Philistia and Neighboring Regions," *AJA* 112 (2008) 225–46; Gur-Arieh et al., "Soot Patterns on Cooking Vessels," in *On Cooking Pots, Drinking Cups, Loom Weights and Ethnicity in Bronze Age Cyprus and Neighboring Regions: An International Archaeological Symposium Held in Nicosia, November 6th–7th, 2010* (ed. V. Karageorghis and O. Kouka; Nicosia: Leventis Foundation, 2011) 349–55; Killebrew, "Late Bronze and Iron I Cooking Pots in Canaan," 93–95, 107.

35. Ben-Shlomo et al., "Cooking Identities," 225–46; Killebrew, "Late Bronze and Iron I Cooking Pots in Canaan," 93–95, 107. See also Assaf Yasur-Landau, "Old Wine in New Vessels: Intercultural Contact, Innovation and Aegean, Canaanite and Philistine Foodways" in *TA* 32 (2005) 168–91.

used for the serving and sharing of food.[36] In the Hebrew Bible, words for cooking pots include *kiyyôr* (Exod 30:28, 35:16); *pārûr* (Num 11:8, Judg 6:19, 1 Sam 2:14); *sîr* (Exod 16:3; 2 Kgs 4:38–41; Jer 1:13; Ezek 11:3, 7, 11; Mic 3:3; Zech 14:20–21); *qallaḥat* (1 Sam 2:14; Mic 3:3); and *dûd* (1 Sam 2:14). Several of these pots are mentioned in 1 Sam 2:13–14:

> This is how the priests used to deal with the people: When anyone brought a sacrifice, the priest's boy would come along with a three-pronged fork while the meat was boiling, and he would thrust it into the cauldron [*kiyyôr*], or the kettle [*dûd*], or the great pot [*qallaḥat*], or the small cooking-pot [*pārûr*]; and whatever the fork brought up, the priest would take away on it. This was the practice at Shiloh with all the Israelites who came there. (NJPS)

Other artifacts that were found alongside the cooking pots in Room 2 were a vase/juglet and a small black juglet. Vases and juglets were typically used to store oils and perfumes that are often associated with cultic libations and rituals. The fenestrated stand and the cooking pot were located next to each other, with another cooking pot found less than a meter north of them. Food was often served in and shared from cooking pots, kraters, and bowls. The microartifact samples (grape pips, cereals, legumes, and fish bones and scales) as well as the zooarchaeological remains (cow: lower molar, calcaneus, and a calf astragalus; and sheep: pelvis fragment and astragalus), coupled with the artifacts of food consumption and the lack of a cooking installation in the room proper suggest that food consumption rather than preparation occurred in Room 2.[37]

If Room 2 were used for food preparation, then one would expect to find cooking installations in it, such as a *tabun/tannur* or grinding installations. Artifacts related to food preparation found in Room 2 include two cooking pots, two pieces of pumice and grinding-stone fragments, and micro remains. The fragmentary remains of the grinding stone and pumice are not enough to consider seriously the possibility that the grinding of food occurred here, while the micro remains suggest that food was in all likelihood consumed in this space.

Since cooking pots were used for both the cooking and the serving of a meal, their presence coupled with micro remains and the lack of food-preparation installations indicates the serving and consumption of food. Furthermore, the spatial analysis indicates that

36. Hendrickson and McDonald, "Ceramic Form and Function: An Ethnographic Search and an Archaeological Application," 630–43.

37. Hardin, *Lahav II*, 138–43.

mobility in Room 2 was limited due to the way the artifacts were distributed across the floor. This distribution does not seem to suggest any deliberate pattern, unless the diagonal line that can be drawn from the standing stones and fenestrated stand was intentional. At the same time, limited mobility hardly implies that Room 2 was used as a central living room where many household activities took place. It can be argued, moreover, that this kind of chaotic and occupied space seems to be a pattern in itself. For instance, Z. Zevit identified this configuration in other activity areas dedicated to religious ritual at Megiddo and Lachish.[38]

Artifacts relating to religious ritual and the serving and consumption of food dominated Room 2 of the F7 house at Tel Halif. Thus, it may be said that the spatial analysis of both the room's location and its remains plausibly indicates a primary activity of religious-domestic feasting. This then leads to the question of why this religious-domestic feasting took place.

6. The Importance of Feasts

Although humans need food in order to survive, the preparation, serving, and consumption of meals transcends this necessity. As a result, there is social significance to food that interacts with the construction of identity and status.[39] As Simoons argues, foodways, or "modes of feeling, thinking, and behaving about food that are common to a cultural group . . . serve to bind individuals in larger social groups through shared understandings of cultural conventions."[40] One might say that "the family who eats together stays together."

Meals are a social event and thus have meaning through the nature of interpersonal relationships, roles, and their meaning. M. Douglas writes, "[T]he meaning of a meal is found in a system of repeated analogies. Each meal carries something of the meaning of other meals; each meal is a structured social event which structures others in its own image."[41] That is to say, the repetition of a meal reinforces its value among its participants. If one were to understand

38. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 252–54; Hardin, *Lahav II*, 139.

39. See Jack Goody, *Cooking, Class, and Cuisine: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

40. Frederick J. Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh: Food Avoidances in the Old World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967) 3; Roy C. Wood. *The Sociology of a Meal* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995) 40.

41. Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," *Daedalus* 101 (1972) 61–81 (here, pp. 69–70).

that the preparation, serving, and consumption of meals—even everyday meals—provide the location and setting of the day-to-day enactment of a variety of accepted norms within the group, then the potential contribution of every meal to the dynamics of social values should be posited. These norms include the accepted social, political, economic, and religious rules and standards of the group. In particular, social norms include identity and membership, gender roles, and power relations (or the distribution of power by gender). K. Twiss writes that food "is used to express who we are, who we wish to be, asserting our membership in certain groups, and distancing ourselves from others."[42]

Meals, then, are not simply about the food but also reflect how the group views itself. The ingredients and cooking methods used, how the food is served, and to whom—all these construct and exhibit the identity and values of the group. Building on this statement, household members (those who are related and even those who are not) should be regarded as the most important relationships because of their influence, including food choice and assignments of particular household roles. In other words, meals serve as a tool for the negotiation of various social dimensions within the household—including that of religious ritual.

Like ordinary daily meals, extraordinary meals or feasts are a principal feature of a household and occupy a central place in social practice. J. Greer defines feasts as "the specialized consumption of food, often meat, and drink, in a communal setting set apart precisely because of the 'highly condensed' symbolic importance of the event."[43] While Greer's definition is clear, there can be potential differences between elite and domestic feasting—a point that C. Meyers includes by noting several features of a typical feast: (1) the amount and quality of food and drink is superior to an average meal; (2) there is a special purpose for the meal; (3) it is typically longer than an average meal and may consist of several meals over many days; and (4) it often has more participants, including neighbors and other kinship-related households.[44] Celebratory meals or feasts simultane-

42. Katheryn Twiss, "We Are What We Eat," in *The Archaeology of Food and Identity* (Occasional Paper 34; Carbondale, IL: The Center for Archaeological Investigations, 2007) 1–15 (here, p. 1).

43. Jonathan S. Greer, *Dinner at Dan: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sacred Feasts at Iron Age II Tel Dan and Their Significance* (CHANE 66; Leiden: Brill, 2013) 3.

44. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 157.

ously correspond with and are distinguished from everyday meals.[45] Taking care to consider the feast as more than just the communal consumption of food and/or drink, one can discover the diverse collection of cultural practices embedded within it, such as religious and spiritual practices, dietary preferences, and culinary practices, household and power relationships, and conflict resolution—just to name a few. Feasts function as a way to influence and reinforce the group's social identity and norms.[46]

7. Religious-Domestic Feasting in the Hebrew Bible

The spatial analysis of Room 2 in Tel Halif's F7 house suggests that religious-domestic feasting regularly occurred there. The Hebrew Bible provides examples of ways that this room could have been used on the various occasions that would give rise to a religious-domestic feast. The biblical texts portray special occasions as most likely being observed and celebrated within the household. They typically involved the consumption of a special meal that, like most elements of daily life, was essentially religious in nature. Feasts in ancient Israel and Judah can be categorized as two types of events: regular or occasional. Within the household, regular feasts were connected to events that occurred annually, monthly, and weekly, while occasional feasts were often related to life-cycle events.[47]

Regular yearly activities included the annual agricultural festivals, most of which adopted further significance for religious and group identity. The primary agricultural/religious festivals included: Passover/Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Booths (Deut 16:1–17; Exod 23:14–17; and Lev 23:4–25);[48] these major festivals included animal sacrifices to the household deities. In the Hebrew Bible, the major festivals came to be considered high holy days, during

45. Altmann, "Festive Meals and Identity in Deuteronomy." See also Peter Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel: Deuteronomy's Identity Politics in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context* (BZAW 424; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011).

46. Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, "Digesting the Feast: Good to Eat, Good to Drink, Good to Think: An Introduction," in *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (ed. M. Dietler and B. Hayden; Smithsonian Series in Archaeological Inquiry; Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 2001) 1–20 (here, p. 3).

47. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 157; another special occasion that would necessitate a feast would be the arrival of a guest. However, this topic falls more in the category of hospitality than in religious feasting.

48. All references and quotations from the Hebrew Bible are from the NRSV, unless noted otherwise.

which sacrifices were conducted at the local shrine or, eventually, the temple in Jerusalem. However, C. Meyers argues that feasts and sacrifices, even for Passover, Weeks, and Booths, held at local sanctuaries and the temple were modeled after the religious feasts held within the household.

> The food and drink offerings at shrines can be considered household practices writ large, for they originate in the household, not vice versa: festival meals and sacrificial practices at sanctuaries were developments of the family meal. That is, the festivals and feasts . . . were elaborated versions of ordinary household foodways.[49]

Indeed, passages in the Hebrew Bible support the notion that religious feasts occurred within the home: for instance, Job's children would take turns hosting the feast-day in their homes (Job 1:4); and Deut 14:22–27 illustrates the type of household feast associated with the household offering of the family's tithe: the tithe of grain, wine, oil, and the firstlings of the herd and flock are to be consumed at the location God chooses. However, if the distance was too far to carry the tithe, then people could sell the tithe and "spend the money for whatever you wish—oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink, or whatever you desire. And you shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your household rejoicing together" (Deut 14:26). The trading in and eating of the tithe by the household reinstates the role of the household in religious ritual and its function as an event that solidified group identity.[50] Furthermore, the regulations about the first Passover state that the observance was primarily a meal in which the entire household participated:

> [T]ake a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one. . . . They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire with its head, legs, and inner organs. (Exod 12:3–4a, 7–9)

J. Barton notes that the eating of this meal was a family activity that took place in the home and only with members of the household, for its purpose was to celebrate and strengthen both national identity and the extended family structure. Furthermore, W. Johnston includes in his discussion ethnographic parallels of sacrificial

49. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 165.

50. See Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel*, 211–40.

meals among the Bedouin and pre-Islamic Arabs. Communal feasts served as rituals to help secure the household on occasions of new beginnings (for instance, a new well, house, or marriage). The feast functioned as a way to discourage the household deities from any harmful actions against the participants. Similarly, a ritual feast helped secure protection for the household in the new year.[51]

In some ways different from Passover, agricultural harvests were special occasions on which to celebrate and give thanks to the household deity/deities for their provision of fertility of the land. These celebrations are depicted in the biblical texts as including a feast, with the superior portion offered to the deity as a sacrifice, and the rest as a festive meal for the entire household. Sacrifices, in domestic contexts in particular, would have been a marker of feasting because the sacrifice was probably viewed as the household's sharing a meal with the household deities. M. Douglas notes the connection between the altar and the "table": the altar on which the sacrifice to the deity was made is symbolic of the table, and the sacrifice itself was symbolic of the meal.[52] Indeed, the same foodstuffs and ingredients were generally used for feasts but to a larger degree. Bread, cereals, seasonal vegetables and fruits, olives, wine, and beer were served at both ordinary and extraordinary meals; however, the most striking difference between the everyday meal and the meal for special occasions was the inclusion of meat followed by an abundance of food and fermented beverages.[53] According to some biblical texts, once the sacrifice was offered and the portion burned, depending on the type of sacrifice, what remained became part of the household feast (Lev 7:15).

One of the religious ritual activities that occurred in the home or with household members on a monthly basis was the new moon celebration (Num 10:10; Ps 81:3; 2 Chr 8:12–13; Hos 2:11; and Amos 8:5).[54] In 1 Samuel 20, David and Jonathan devise a plan using the

51. John Barton, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 75; William Johnston, *Exodus* (Old Testament Guides; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 40–43; Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: John Knox, 1974) 197–98.

52. Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," 71.

53. Altmann, "Festive Meals and Identity in Deuteronomy." See also the essays by Pace and Meyers in this volume.

54. While the new moon festival celebrated the first day of the lunar month, the observance of the festival on the 17th of Tishri became especially important. See King and Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 353.

guise of the new moon festival to uncover King Saul's intentions toward David:

> David said to Jonathan, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at the meal, but let me go, so that I may hide in the field until the third evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' " (1 Sam 20:5–6)

Regulations regarding the proper sacrifices for the new moon are found in Num 28:11–15. However, the observance of this special occasion was not without criticism. The prophet Isaiah condemned Judahites for their empty religious rituals on the new moon, Sabbath, and appointed festivals (Isa 1:13–14), while Amos criticized the deceitful merchants and their impatience for the new moon and Sabbath observances to pass (Amos 8:5–6).

Regular religious celebrations that occurred weekly were dominated by the Sabbath. Most of the textual references to the Sabbath speak of cessation from work, and this is clearly primarily referring to household work (Exod 20:8–11; 23:12; Lev 23:2–3; Deut 5:12–15). According to Num 28:9–10, the Israelites were supposed to offer YHWH a drink offering and burnt offerings of two male lambs and choice flour mixed with oil every Sabbath.[55] It is commonly thought that these offerings were to be conducted at local shrines; however, it is likely that the religious rituals conducted at home were the model for sacrifices at the shrine. Furthermore, the likelihood that household members would make the trip to a local shrine or the temple every Sabbath is remote. Thus, most likely, the Sabbath celebrations occurred in the home.[56]

Significant events related to the life cycle were also a religious concern. Life-cycle events included birth, circumcision, puberty, marriage, and death; thus, the life-cycle aspect was dominated by reproductive concerns. Ancient Israel and Judah were agrarian societies that were dependent on their land, flocks, herds, and each other for survival. Every member of the household was required to participate in household chores, regardless of sex, age, or any other difference. The fertility of the household land *and* its members was paramount; the infertility of either meant the decline and possible

55. However, other passages in the Hebrew Bible clearly indicate that the Sabbath rules were not always strictly observed: Lev 26:34–35; Num 15:32–36; Jer 17:21–23; Ezek 20:24.

56. Carol Meyers, "Household Religion," in *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (ed. F. Stavrakopoulou and J. Barton; London: T. & T. Clark, 2011) 120–34 (here, pp. 124–26); idem, *Rediscovering Eve*, 157–62.

extinction of the family. Consequently, the safe conception, pregnancy, delivery, and survival of mother and child were expected to be major motivations for household religious rituals. The issue of reproduction was so important that any resource that could aid in the successful fertility of the land and people was used.

In several instances, Jeremiah writes about Judahite families who offer domestic sacrifices to a household deity other than YHWH, the most well known of which is this verse: "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods" (Jer 7:18).[57] S. Ackerman suggests that the queen of heaven is a fusion of the goddesses Astarte and Ishtar, both goddesses of fertility—which is clearly a domestic topic and comprised some of the family's religious activities. If this is true about the queen of heaven, the activities mentioned by Jeremiah were part of the domestic religious ritual itself.[58] These domestic elements included agrarian fertility, health issues, reproductive concerns, and life-cycle events, such as birth rituals. Other life-cycle events included the name-giving ceremony, which may have included a circumcision ceremony for males, and possibly weaning (Gen 17:12, 21:4).[59] These ceremonies would have included offerings of food and drink to the household deity/deities and a feast for the household. For instance, the sacrifices a mother was to make after the birth of a child included purification offerings, after which the consecrated food became a festive meal (Leviticus 7; 12:6). The little that can be gleaned from marriage narratives also suggests that marriage celebrations included festive meals (Gen 29:22; Judg 14:10; and see Tob 7:13–14).[60]

57. See also Jer 44:17–19, especially v. 19: "And the women said, 'Indeed we will go on making offerings to the queen of heaven and pouring libations to her; do you think that we made cakes for her, marked with her image, and poured libations to her without our husbands being involved?" For a discussion about the "queen of heaven," see Susan Ackerman, "Household Religion, Family Religion, and Women's Religion in Ancient Israel," in *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (ed. J. Bodel and S. M. Olyan; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) 127–58; idem, "'And the Women Knead Dough': The Worship of the Queen of Heaven in 6th Century Judah," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. P. Day; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 109–24.

58. Ibid., 116; idem, "Household Religion, Family Religion, and Women's Religion in Ancient Israel," 145.

59. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 157–60.

60. Life expectancy was extremely low, with only half the population surviving past the age of 18. See Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 112; idem, *Rediscovering Eve*, 99; Elizabeth A. R. Willett, "Infant Mortality and Women's Religion in the

Clearly, one of the main concerns in the Hebrew Bible is the proper worship of YHWH. In fact, biblical scholarship and archaeology have long been consumed (pun intended) with the religious rituals conducted at the so-called official institutions: the tabernacle, the shrines, and the temple. However, a closer examination of passages from the Hebrew Bible suggests that religious rituals and the feasts that accompanied them occurred for most of the average ancient Israelites and Judahites in domestic settings. The spatial analysis of Room 2 in Tel Halif's F7 house supports this image. Like most houses in ancient Israel and Judah, the F7 house was utilitarian and multifunctional; however, the artifacts uncovered in Room 2 indicate that activities of religious ritual and feasting occurred there. The Hebrew Bible specifies that many occasions justified the need for a religious feast. These included regular events, such as Passover and the new moon celebrations, and occasional events, such as the healthy birth of a baby. The religious rituals for these occasions, which were more than likely conducted in Room 2 could include the performance of purification rites, food and libation offerings, the burning of incense, and the serving and consumption of communal meals by the household members and their guests.

8. Summary

The ancient Israelite and Judahite household had many occasions on which to hold religious feasts, including the regular annual, monthly, and weekly feasts and the occasional feasts that are often related to life-cycle events. The most likely location of these events, regardless of any biblical prescription to celebrate the high holy days in Jerusalem, was the home. Most activities, both ordinary and extraordinary, occurred within or near the home—religious feasting would be no different. Ritual objects and the activities associated with them were conducted in homes near kitchen installations or other facilities associated with the preparation and consumption of food. Room 2 in the F7 dwelling at Tel Halif fits this food and cult pattern, providing a clear example of such a location. The room's

Biblical Periods," in *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East* (ed. B. Alpert-Nakhai; Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2008) 77–96; cf. idem, *Women and Household Shrines in Ancient Israel* (Ph.D. diss., The University of Arizona, 1999) 219; Shafer-Elliott, "Economics and Gender in the Hebrew Bible," *The Oxford Encyclopedia on the Bible and Gender Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Albertz and Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion*, 388–92, 395, 398; Meyers, "Household Religion," 126–28.

assemblage of consumption and ritual artifacts visibly demonstrates that religious feasting occurred in the F7 house: Room 2 served as a segregated space in which to store and conduct the household's religious feasts. The biblical texts portray special occasions as most likely being observed and celebrated within the household and typically involving the consumption of a special meal that was essentially religious in nature. It is likely that the religious rituals conducted in the home were the model for sacrifices at the shrine and temple. Consequently, the "official" religious rituals conducted at the shrine or temple can be viewed as being directly linked to the religious feasts of the average Israelite and Judahite household. Whether the feast was the result of a regular occurrence, such as the annual, monthly, and weekly observations, or was a special occasion, such as a birth or wedding, feasts were as much part of the household calendar as they are today.

Feasting and Foodways in Psalm 23 and the Contribution of Redaction Criticism to the Interpretation of Meals

Klaus-Peter Adam

Psalm 23 offers a seemingly simple reference to a meal. The psalm first introduces the imagery of a shepherd wandering with his sheep in vv. 1–4. Then, in v. 5, the speaker of the psalm finds himself invited to sit down at a table for a meal. The concluding v. 6 provides an outlook on the speaker's future at the temple.

How Psalm 23 made it into the current collection of the Psalter and how its shape has been modified during this process are the core questions of redaction-critical readings. Composition-critical readings of the Psalms that clarify the development of collections and subcollections in the final Psalter have been emerging during the last two decades. Redaction-critical analyses consider the psalms' particular shape as well as the development of their historical meaning as separate texts and as collections and subcollections. One of the results of redaction criticism is to understand the meal scene in Ps 23:5–6 as being embedded within the subcollection of the psalms of the individual who is being referred to in Psalms 15–24. The meal in the immediate context of Ps 22:26 offers a good opportunity to probe the contribution of redaction-critical perspectives to the understanding of the meal in Psalm 23.

Before presenting the redaction-critical results for the function of the meal, however, I must evaluate the immediate thematic context of the meal in Ps 23:5–6. The relevance and meaning of the shepherd-sheep imagery in Ps 23:1–4 emerge in the attitude of the individual, who refrains from harming his enemy and instead trusts in the divine defense. After explicating the imagery of vv. 1–4, I will analyze the meal's function and its precise nature in Ps 23:5 in general (§5). Then, the final step (§6) will be to turn to redaction-critical implications for the meal. It is critical first to determine what type of meal is referred to in Psalm 23. When v. 5 is read with v. 6, the meal potentially takes place at the temple, yet whether this meal relates to

the sacrificial meal for the poor in the sanctuary in Ps 22:23–27 or whether it relates to ongoing meals, as the phrase "all the days of my life" (23:6a) suggests, calls for thorough discussion. A comparison of Ps 23:5 with three depictions of meals from Late Bronze and Iron Age contexts illustrates the cultural types of meals and their potential impact on our understanding of Ps 23:5. Two of the depictions that I consider below show a royal victory banquet; the third is carved on a sarcophagus and alludes to a funerary framework. The iconographies of funerary and royal meals help to delineate the religious-historical roots of the meal in Ps 23:5, along with a cultural interpretation of the meal, and contribute to the redaction-critical explanation of the meal in Ps 23:5 in juxtaposition with the meal for the poor Ps 22:23–27.

Form-critical readings of the Psalms typically have interpreted meals and feasting in close relation to the feast of an individual who, after recovering from sickness or from other forms of distress, vows in a song of praise to sponsor an offering. This may have been a meal of thanksgiving.[1] The song of thanksgiving in Psalm 22 that follows the lament in Ps 22:23–27 is a typical example (see §5 below).[2] Different from Psalm 22, the outline of Psalm 23 elucidates its particular function as a "song of trust." The thematically unique setting of Psalm 23 requires that the meal's stark contrast to the shepherd-sheep metaphor be explained. Three of the sections below cover the meanings of these seemingly unrelated aspects of Psalm 23. They explore the unusual contrast between the passive role of the sheep and the shepherd's powerful protection from all forms of vicious enemies (§2), they deliberate on the collective overtones of the shep-

1. Typical examples of thanksgiving psalms by an individual who vows to sponsor a meal are Ps 116:5–19, esp. v. 17 (*ʾezbaḥ zebaḥ tôdâ*, "I will sacrifice a sacrifice of thankgsgiving") and Jonah 2, esp. v. 10[9] (*ʾezbĕḥâ*, "I will sacrifice"). See Bernd Janowski, "Das Dankopfer: Theologische und kultgeschichtliche Aspekte," in *Le Repas de Dieu / Das Mahl Gottes: 4. Symposium Strasbourg* (ed. C. Grappe; WUNT 1/169; Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 51–68 (here, pp. 53–56, and on the form of the praise offering, p. 64). On the form-critical analysis of the songs of thanksgiving, see Hermann Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen: Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933) 265–68; Frank Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969) 216; Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part I* (FOTL 14; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988) 14–16.

2. Ps 22:25–26 (MT). See also on the *todah*-formula in psalms of thanksgiving: Ps 30:2, 118:21, 138:2–3; Isa 12:1; Sir 51:1–6a; cf. Crüsemann, *Studien*, 267–68.

herd and sheep motif (§3), and they consider the nature of the enemies (§4). A methodological prerequisite to unfolding the thematic and redaction-historical discussions, however, is to scrutinize the psalm form-critically and offer a translation.

1. Form and Outline

Form-critical approaches have interpreted Psalm 23 against the backdrop of the much more common songs of lament, in which the speaker typically expresses his trust in Yahweh. Interspersed with overtones of confidence, Psalm 23 is labeled a "song of trust" or "song of confidence," in which the formal element of an expression of confidence, which in other psalms is often coupled with a future hope for salvation, has grown into a psalm of its own,[3] lacking a lament or a plea. The outline of the psalm reflects confidence in Yahweh in the way it arranges nominal and verbal clauses in vv. 1–4. The confession of trust, which in other psalms provides the basis for a plea, is in Psalm 23 an introduction that sets the tone of confidence in Yahweh as a shepherd for the rest of the psalm.[4] The sequence of seven *yiqtol*-sentences develops a scenario in which the speaker describes with confident trust how Yahweh will act on his behalf in the present and how he will continue to act in the future.[5]

Formally, the nominal (or noun) sentences (devoid of a notion of time) in vv. 1a and 4c build a frame around the verbal clauses with the *yiqtol*-clauses in their center; thus, they express the inception and ongoing character of Yahweh's guidance and protection. One more isolated *yiqtol*-sentence, v. 4d, follows the nominal sentence in v. 4c. Formally, v. 4c–d can best be interpreted as a transition from v. 4c to v. 5. Hence, from a formal point of view, Psalm 23 breaks down into two parts, vv. 1–4 and vv. 5–6.

Verses 1–4 begin with a nominal sentence (v. 1a) that functions as a heading; another nominal sentence, which is found near the end

3. See, for instance, Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 254–56; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen: Psalm 1–50*—Kommentar zum Alten Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung (NEchtB; Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1993) 152; Klaus Seybold, *Die Psalmen* (HAT 1/15; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996) 101.

4. Verse quotations are provided in the translation below.

5. In the *yiqtol*, "the internal structure of a situation is conceived of as extended over an indefinite period in the time prior to the act of speaking"—that is, this form of the verb (different from the participle) emphasizes the inception of a situation, and it "combines the notions of commencement and continuation" (Bruce K. Waltke and Michael O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 1990] 502–3).

of this first part (v. 4c), is a formal echo of the heading. Not only do the two nominal sentences at the beginning and end of the first section refer to each other in formal respects, they are also closely related to each other in content. They are statements of confidence: "Yahweh is my shepherd," and "you are with me." Enclosed within the nominal sentences are metaphors of the way (vv. 2b–4b). The nominal sentences establish the tone and themes: Yahweh's presence with and protection of the supplicant. With these themes, vv. 1a and 4c provide the basis for the supplicant's dwelling with Yahweh.

The sentence arrangement also structures the description of a meal scene in vv. 5–6. Formally, 5a and b return to the *yiqtol* of v. 4d, and thus 5a is joined on each side by two *yiqtol*-sentences. A nominal sentence that adds the image of an overflowing cup rounds off the meal metaphor. The concluding, faith-filled outlook on the future in v. 6 is maintained in a *yiqtol*-clause followed by a *w-qatal*.[6] It expresses trust in the repeated and ongoing experience of Yahweh's help for a length of days.

This formal analysis of Ps 23:1–4, 5 and the final statement of trust in v. 6 suggest a two-part structure for Psalm 23. The first part begins with the nominal clauses of confession in v. 1a, and it ends with the confessions in 4c. Verses 1–4 concisely describe Yahweh's function as a shepherd who guides the supplicant and protects him from the threats of death and, more generally, from any "evil." The spatial metaphors (green pastures, waters of rest, valleys of death shadow) evoke a journey or way. In contrast, the short second part of Psalm 23, v. 5, refers to the supplicant's meal in terms of a static image: v. 5c is formally a nominal sentence that is like a completing metaphor in the description of the abundance of the conqueror's meal. The content of this short second section is more concrete than vv. 1–4 in that it reflects on the meal as a symbol of divine help against enemies. In content and form, the victory meal, which will be expanded on below, is separated from the shepherd-sheep theme in vv. 1–4.

The form and content separate Psalm 23 into two parts (vv. 1–4 and vv. 5–6); however, the two parts are interrelated. One link between them is, for instance, the theme of enemies. Verse 5a literally mentions them, but both "death shadow" and "evil" in v. 4ab allude to the enemies' threatening nature. Verse 6 also mentions enmity, indirectly. The verb *yirdĕpûnî* ("will pursue me"), which is part of the final expression of confidence in v. 6, may be seen as a reversal of the

6. The *w-qatal* adopts the temporal meaning of a *yiqtol*.

Translation[a]

1a	Yahweh is my shepherd.	*nominal*
b	I do not want;	*yiqtol*
2a	on the green pastures he lets me rest,	*yiqtol*
b	above the waters of rest he leads me,	*yiqtol*
3a	he brings back my life.	*yiqtol*
b	He leads me on the entrenchments of justice	*yiqtol*
c	for the sake of his name.	
4a	Even though I wandered in the valley of death-shadow,	*yiqtol*
b	I do not fear evil	*yiqtol*
c	because you are with me.	*nominal*
d	Your rod and your staff, they protect me.	*yiqtol*
5a	You arrange in front of me a table in the face of my enemies;	*yiqtol*
b	you fatten my face with oil.	*yiqtol*
c	Overflowing is my cup;	*nominal*
6a	only goodness and covenantal help pursue me all the days of my life,	*yiqtol*
b	and I dwell[b] in Yahweh's house for the length of days.	*w-qatal*

a. The translation is my own.

b. Derived from *yšb*. The MT vocalizes this word as a form of *šwb*, "I will return"; however, this verb is rarely used with the preposition *bet*.

more-typical allusion, which is pursuit by an enemy or a person with malicious intent.[7] Verse 4b alludes to a scenario in which the petitioner expects to see himself persecuted by an enemy. Instead of the enemy, however, the speaker finds himself "pursued" by "goodness and help/grace" (v. 6: *ṭôb wāḥesed*). The expectation of receiving help from a covenantal ally is the guiding principle behind this imagery: "goodness and grace" are the opposite of what a person can expect from an enemy (v. 5a). Another allusion to the threat of the enemies is found in the theme of "dwelling . . . for the length of days" in v. 6b and the idea of remaining in the house "all the days of my life" in v. 6a, which are in contrast to the movement at the beginning, vv. 1–4a. This movement in vv. 2–3 leads the supplicant into the valley of death, which is juxtaposed with the supplicant's continuous settlement in Yahweh's house in v. 6b. This allusion to the threat of the enemy in both of the formally distinct parts of Psalm 23 leads to a reflection on its themes—namely, (1) the meaning of the shepherd-sheep imagery, and (2) the threat to which the speaker of the psalm sees himself exposed.

7. Enemy, with *ʾôyēb:* Ps 7:6, 31:16; malicious intent: Ps 7:2; 35:2, 6; 71:11; 83:16; 109:16; 119:84, 86, 150, 161; 142:7; 143:3.

2. The Theme of Psalm 23

In its first part, Ps 23:1–4 combines two root metaphors that describe Yahweh as a/the guarantor of life. The first metaphor is of Yahweh as a shepherd who provides food and water, both of which are vital for sheep (v. 2). The second is of Yahweh's rod and staff/scepter, which provides security from the speaker's enemies. Yahweh's support and the speaker's trust in Yahweh become more plausible when one sees them against the backdrop of the speaker's affliction and his exposure to enemies (v. 5). Psalm 23 is not a typical psalm of the individual, however. It does not limit itself to language typically used in psalms of the individual.[8] Psalm 23 alludes subtly to the speaker's conflict with enemies and refrains from rendering any details. Based on the formal analysis above, I argue two interpretive conclusions:

1. In spite of its form as an individual's expression of confidence, Psalm 23 alludes to experiences that are typical for a collective. By using the shepherd imagery, the psalm draws more on Israel and Judah's collective identity—that is, on the exodus (as in its parallels in Ps 77:21 and 78:52–53 on the wandering through the desert)—than on what one gathers from other psalms are more specifically the experiences of an individual.[9]
2. The speaker's bold proclamation of confidence in Yahweh in the first half, vv. 1–4, anticipates impairments of life that can be experienced at the hand of an enemy. The enemy's threat—although it is not mentioned until v. 5a—is already a part of the imagery through the reference to the "entrenchments of justice" in v. 3b, "the valley of death's shadow" in v. 4a, and the "evil" caused by enemies in v. 4b.

3. Collective Language in Psalm 23

Expressions of trust by an individual have their own typical language.[10] Like other psalms of the individual, Psalm 23 is formally kept in the first-person singular, as one might expect, yet right away

8. See on the form-critical markers of the psalms of the individual: Gunkel, *Einleitung*, §6, "Die Klagelieder des Einzelnen," 172–265; and §7, "Die Danklieder des Einzelnen," 265–92. See the expressions of confidence, for instance, in Ps 18:3: "Yahweh is my fortress, my rock and my deliverer"; in Ps 32:7: "You are a hiding place for me; from distress you preserve me"; in Ps 116:5: "Gracious is Yahweh and righteous; and our God is merciful."

9. See also Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 152, 154. As a result of the use of collective language, they suggest dating Psalm 23 to the postexilic period.

10. See, for a survey of formulas of trust used by an individual, for instance: Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 232–33. Examples are formulas such as "I trust in you," in Ps 13:6; 25:2; 26:1; 31:7, 15; or "I keep Yahweh always before me," in Ps 16:8 and others.

the leading metaphor of shepherd and sheep transcends the individual by referring to a plurality of sheep under the guidance of one shepherd.[11] The metaphor of the guided sheep is essentially collective in nature. In this essay, I first consider the metaphors of the shepherd, who provides sustenance in the form of water and green pastures and protects the sheep. I then proceed to the comparison of settling down with the "resting" herd animals. Finally, I consider how the phrase "restoration of life" reverberates with predominantly collective experiences.

First, the expression "I will not want" (v. 2) uses a negative formulation to describe a well-sustained life without lack. Qoh 6:2 offers an example of individuals who are experiencing the absence of want or lack when they are blessed with material goods and a good reputation: "Those to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that they lack nothing of all that they desire" (*wĕʾênennû ḥāsēr lĕnapšô*).

More often, the state of want refers to a lack of sustenance and to the experience of need that is typical for collective experiences of war and battles led against enemies.[12] Deut 28:48 is a case in point. Framed in the characteristic second-person singular—that is, from the collective's perspective—it describes exposure to enemies: "Therefore, you shall serve your enemies whom Yahweh will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and lack *(ûbĕḥōsēr*) of everything. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you."

The time of Israel's collective wandering in the desert, which typically evoked want was instead, as Deut 2:7 highlights, praised as a time of sustenance for Israel: "Surely, Yahweh your God has blessed you in all your undertakings; he knows your wandering through this great wilderness. These forty years Yahweh your God has been

11. Only Gen 48:15–16 features Yahweh as the personal shepherd of an individual. All other instances refer to him as the head of a collective. See Regine Hunziker-Rodewald, *Hirt und Herde: Ein Beitrag zum alttestamentlichen Gottesverständnis* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001) 173. With respect to the meaning of the metaphor about the shepherd, Hunziker-Rodewald (pp. 38, 168–72) suggests that it expresses not so much the idea of Yahweh's remote and distant rule as a king as Yahweh's personal responsibility for his sheep, which he tends up close. In Psalm 23, both aspects work together. As the song of confidence by an individual, with collective undertones, Psalm 23 integrates the aspects of Yahweh's royal rule over a collective and expresses them in the form of his responsibility for the speaker as an individual.

12. The intransitive use of *ḥsr* in Ps 23:1 is otherwise not attested. See Altmann, "Feast and Famine," in this volume.

with you; you have lacked nothing."[13] The experience of lack is predominantly described in situations of Israel's want as a collective. In the remainder of the first section of Psalm 23, vv. 3–4 deepen the experience of not having lacked anything with positive descriptions of what a lack of sustenance would mean but in this case does not mean. Indirectly, the potential lack of sustenance is associated with the enemies' attack.

A primary reference to Yahweh's guidance of Israel is as a saved collective during the exodus. Israel's collective memory of the exodus is alluded to by the mention of green pastures that allow herd animals to lie down.[14] Together with the metaphor of the waters of rest/restfulness, the pastures represent general sustenance under a herdsman's guidance (vv. 1aβ–2). These metaphors fit a typical example of the life of an individual. However, it is only the setting of Psalm 23 that suggests an individualistic meaning. The experiences that Psalm 23 mentions are more often from Israel's collective history. "Lying down" (*yarbîṣēnî*, Hiphil), for instance, is used multiple times for a collective. Using the animal metaphor of a lion, the writer describes Judah's lying down in Gen 49:9:

> Judah is a lion's whelp;
> from the prey, my son, you have gone up.
> He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion,
> like a lioness—who dares rouse him?"

"Lying down" or "crouching" can describe the situation after the end of a period of economic distress, as in Isa 14:30, with metaphors of grazing animals:

> The firstborn of the poor will graze,
> and the needy lie down in safety;
> but I will make your root die of famine,
> and your remnant I will kill.

This collective aspect of "lying down" is emphasized when it is used with the noun "resting place," as in Isa 65:10:

> Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,
> and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down (*lĕrēbeṣ*),
> for my people who have sought me.

The resting place in Jer 50:6 is also used for a collective:

13. See also the reference to the desert in Neh 9:21 and the subsequent entry to the land "where you will lack nothing," guided by Yahweh, Deut 8:9; cf. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 154.

14. Exod 13:17, 21; 15:13; see Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 154.

My people have been lost sheep;
their shepherds have led them astray,
turning them away on the mountains;
from mountain to hill they have gone,
they have forgotten their fold (*ribṣām*).

Besides use for a collective entity, the imagery of peaceful resting can designate the resting space or pasture of an individual—for instance, the paradigmatic "just" in Prov 24:15:

Do not lie (as a) wicked (person, *rāšāʿ*) in wait against the pastures of the righteous;
do no violence to his resting place.

Third, the imagery of the "green pastures" (v. 2a) that enhances the character of Psalm 23 as a collective song of trust combines two aspects: green pastures are a pasture for (herd) animals and also a dwelling place for the people, as for instance in Ps 83:13. Typically it is used in the history of Israel when looking back, as in this verse, which reflects the loss and destruction of safe habitation. Allusions such as this to a lost dwelling place are often read as references to the Judahites' exile, which the Babylonians forced on them. However, in connection with the exodus motif, the image addresses the fact that Israel will regain a restful space.[15]

Thus, pastures as metaphors for dwelling places and habitation can, if turned negatively, describe Israel's and Judah's destruction. The lament of Ps 74:1b opens with a call that implies Israel's self-understanding as Yahweh's herd: "Why will the smoke of your anger burn against the sheep of your pasture?" Ps 74:20 then reflects on the destruction of the temple by enemies and moves their violence to the foreground: "Consider/have regard for your covenant, because the dark places of the land are pastures of (physical) violence." Symbolic of the destruction of livable space, the "fields of Jacob" (Lam 2:2) are struck by Yahweh's wrath. The combination of this event with the destruction of strongholds ("he has broken the strongholds of daughter Judah") is meant to describe how Yahweh has "wounded" the kingdom and its rulers altogether (Lam 2:2).

The importance of the pastures of Zion as livable space is often highlighted retrospectively in light of their loss during the Babylonian destruction in 587 B.C.E. Jer 6:2 connects the pastures with Zion as having originally been a fruitful place: "I have made daughter

15. The goal of the exodus in Exod 15:13; the settlements as the hoped-for *telos* of Israel's return in Jer 23:3, 31:23; and Ezek 34:14–15.

Zion like the loveliest pasture." What follows is the announcement of Zion's destruction. As a situation of utmost distress and destruction, Jer 25:34–38 describes the painful experience of shepherds in flight from an onslaught. This includes the destruction of the dwelling places/pastures: "[T]he peaceful pastures are devastated because of the fierce anger of Yahweh" (v. 37).

On the other hand, Zeph 2:6 continues with the positive side of this theme by conveying the peaceful idea of pastures that will open up as places for settlement after the destruction: "And the district by the sea shall become places for pens of shepherds and folds for flocks." Naturally, in a time of destruction, pastures were laid waste.[16] Joel 1:19–20 reflects devastated pastures and drought, and Joel 2:22 announces their change to a green and fruitful state.[17]

The restoration of the pasture is also a theme in the context of the retribution of an individual in Job 8:6: "[I]f you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore to you your rightful place." Ps 65:8–12 describes the well-watered pastures that serve as a place for the flocks and, secondarily, a place generally filled with joy, when it mentions the "pastures of the wilderness that overflow," and "the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy." The settlement metaphor clearly reflects the collective history of Israel, who is guided by Yahweh as a herd of sheep, and the metaphor of habitation and settlement strongly reverberates with prophetic hopes for restoration.

Fourth, besides *ḥsr*, "being in need," and *rbṣ* Hiphil, "to lie down," the green pastures that serve as dwelling space are also a metaphor for "rest/resting places" (*mĕnuḥôt*, Ps 23:2b). With this terminology, v. 2b primarily refers to a collective experience, which is also reflected in other psalms in reference to the exodus. Ps 95:11 is a case in point: "Therefore in my anger I swore, 'They shall not enter my rest.'"[18] Additional contexts of "rest" suggest seeing it as a settlement location for a collective.[19] The term "resting places" (*mĕnuḥôt*)

16. Cf. Jer 9:9: "Take up weeping and wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard; both the birds of the air and the animals have fled and are gone."

17. "Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield."

18. See also Ps 81:6, 106:32; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 154.

19. For instance, Gen 49:15; Isa 28:12; 1 Kgs 8:56 and 5:18; 1 Chr 22:9 with regard to Solomon.

in the plural designates the settlement of the collective "my people" in Isa 32:18.[20] The singular is typically used for the flight of a collective—for instance, Deut 28:65: "Among those nations you shall find no ease, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There Yahweh will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and a languishing spirit." Lam 1:3 offers another parallel:

> Judah has been exiled with suffering and hard servitude;
> she lives now among the nations and finds no resting place (*mānôaḥ*);
> all her pursuers (*kol-rōdĕpêhâ*) have overtaken her in the midst of her distress (*hammĕṣārîm*).

The resting place for a collective in the journey of the exodus through the desert is also mentioned in Num 10:33: "So they set out from the mount of Yahweh three days' journey with the ark of the covenant of Yahweh going before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting place for them." "Resting" is also specifically used for Israel's settlement in Canaan,[21] and the verb "to guide" (*nḥh*, Hiphil) is typical for Yahweh's guidance during the exodus.[22] The use of the "resting place" as metaphor for the more passive experience of a collective settling down is most likely in the background of Ps 23:2. It integrates the "resting place" and the experience of security and sustenance as a collective in a psalm of individual confidence.

Fifth, the unusual idiom of the "waters of restfulness" in v. 2 similarly summarizes collective experiences. The waters for the city's supply in Jerusalem are called the "gently/scarcely flowing" waters of Shiloah (Isa 8:6).[23] The waters' function for the supplicant's survival is clear in both Psalm 23 and Isa 8:6. Psalm 23 does not explicitly allude to Jerusalem's water supply, yet it highlights the necessity of the waters for the survival of the sheep, as the following v. 3a illustrates: "He brings back my life." As in the previous metaphors, the reference to Yahweh as the source of vivification emerges in part from a collective background. The parallel of "bringing back" life in v. 3a can refer to the experiences of Israel as a collective, which Yahweh for instance is "bringing back" or is "restoring" as a people

20. The plural is also used in 1 Chr 2:52.

21. Cf. Deut 12:9, 1 Kgs 8:56, and Isa 11:10.

22. Cf. Exod 13:17, 21; 15:13; see Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 154.

23. It can be assumed that this is a reference to the water-supply system at the time of Hezekiah; see on the archaeological background, among many others, Yigael Shiloh, "The Rediscovery of the Ancient Water System Known as Warren's Shaft," in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed* (repr. and expanded ed.; ed. H. Geva; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000) 46–54.

from the nations (Ezek 39:27). Yahweh also brings back the tribes to Jacob and restores Israel (Jer 50:19).

Comparable is the idea of "turning around" a collective, in the context of the judgment of a collective in Ezek 38:4: "I will restore you and I will give you. . . ."[24] It can also refer to the restoration of the fields of the community (Mic 2:4). Other examples of the restoration of life include the use of *šwb* Hiphil with the object "life" to refer to the ethical mind-set of doing justice or acting in accordance with the Torah.[25] This theme of living out justice by acting according to the Torah is pivotal in the subcollection of Psalms 15–24.[26] Ps 19:8 is a case in point: "The Torah of Yahweh is perfect, it brings back life" (*mĕšîbat-nāpeš*). In this view, Yahweh guarantees ultimate justice once an individual commits to acting according to the Torah.

Parallels of the pivotal metaphors of Psalm 23 and other designations for Yahweh lead to the conclusion that Psalm 23 clothes its expressions of trust in collective language and, in doing so, the speaker reflects on his own trust in light of Israel's and Judah's collective history. Another example of the combination of language from the perspective of the individual with the language of collective experience is seen in v. 3b: "for the sake of your name." It mirrors the tradition of the exodus, yet it also reflects the experiences of individuals found in Ps 25:11 and Exod 3:14.[27] The application of trust in Yahweh guides the speaker to adopt the typical attitude of a pious individual who quietly and obediently follows Yahweh's lead. This trust in Yahweh's role as active judge, for one thing, and

24. Cf. Ezek 39:2, "I will turn you around."

25. Narrative tradition develops this thought. For instance, the plot of the book of Ruth targets acting according to Yahweh's ordinances, which can be life-giving in a situation of widowhood, when a woman needs the support of a family member. In a blessing, Ruth 4:15 calls Yahweh the "restorer of life" (*lĕmašît-nepeš*). Lam 1:11 mentions eating as a prerequisite to restoring one's life (*lĕhāšîb-nepeš*). A call for restoration of life, collectively, appears in Ps 80:4, 8, 20: "[B]ring back/restore us"; it can also refer to the restoration, to the bringing back of the people from exile: 1 Kgs 8:34 / 2 Chr 6:25, Jer 27:22; or, in general, Deut 28:68. In Ps 85:5, "Bring us back (Qal)" refers to Israel's national reestablishment. 2 Kgs 14:25 proclaims, "He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath"; cf. 2 Sam 8:3: "his power/territory (lit., his hand)." In Isa 1:26, Yahweh promises to "bring back your judges."

26. For the redaction-historical analysis of Psalm 15–24 and the themes of justice and Torah-observance, see below.

27. Exod 3:14 describes the experience of an individual in the context of the collective event of the exodus; see also the collective context of Ezek 36:20–23; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 154.

Yahweh's "track" or "entrenchment," for another, are rewarded by Yahweh's corresponding actions.

One can conclude that the speaker of Psalm 23 calls forth these experiences of restoration as life-giving by pointing to the collective's restoration and by rejecting violence against personal enemies. In other words, remembering Israel's collective experience of Yahweh's power during the exodus in Ps 23:1–4a results in identifying with the ideal of a pious individual. On the level of the individual, these typical collective experiences point to hope in Yahweh's active role as judge in personal quarrels. This leads us, next, to a consideration of the nature of the enemies in Psalm 23.

4. The Enemies in Psalm 23

The speaker confesses his trust in the restoration of life in a situation where he experiences a threat against his life. Psalm 23 condenses his present experience of his opponent's persecution and threat in succinct but revealing remarks about "evil" (v. 4b) and about the "enemy/opponent" (v. 5a). In the psalm as a whole, both of these remarks function as a guide to the reader to view Yahweh's action from a particular perspective. Seen in the context of v. 5a, Yahweh's guidance to the fields of justice in vv. 1–4 should be read as a reference to Yahweh's redeeming help at a point in time when enemies are attacking the supplicant.[28] The speaker associates Yahweh's guidance into the "pastures" or the "entrenchments of justice" (v. 3b) with his own behavior as a righteous or a "just" member of his community—that is, under the shepherd's guidance.

The metaphor "entrenchments/paths of justice" is key to understanding Yahweh's role in this psalm of confidence. The image conveys the idea of Yahweh as a shepherd who leads the supplicant on the path of just proceedings, where Yahweh executes justice. The metaphor of "entrenchment/enclosure" or "track/path" has parallels in Proverbs' introductory chapters 1–9, which presuppose a dichotomy of good and evil paths.[29]

Psalm 140 explains the implications of this dichotomy in terms of righteous paths (or enclosures of righteousness) in the context

28. Seybold (*Psalmen*, 101) sees the core of Psalm 23 as the speaker's experience of help/salvation in times of distress, probably in the form of a verdict of nonguilty in the context of a meal.

29. Cf. Prov 2:9: a good path/enclosure; Prov 4:11: righteous/upright path//ways of wisdom; Isa 26:7: path of the righteous (*laṣṣadîq*); Ps 17:5: your (Yahweh's) paths; Ps 65:12: the richness of Yahweh's paths; Prov 2:15, 18; 5:6; Isa 59:8: in the negative sense of a bad path.

of strife between two individuals. As the speaker of Psalm 140 finds himself confronted with the snares and entrapments of his enemies, he hopes to be rescued by Yahweh (vv. 2, 5). The enemies use verbal accusations or conspiracies against him (v. 4; cf. v. 11a); they employ physical violence (*ḥămāsîm*/*ḥāmās*, vv. 2b, 12); and they lay "traps" (v. 6) "along the way/track" (*lĕyad-maʿgāl*). In addition to literal traps, this image in Ps 140:6 refers to the speaker's potential deviation from the set "track" as a righteous person. Ps 140:13 concludes with a reference to Yahweh's function as the judge of a trial who helps the victim (in this case, the speaker), while he [the victim] remains passive. It is the task of the righteous to praise Yahweh's name and to stay in his presence (v. 14). The image of Yahweh's active guidance through accusations in a personal conflict with an enemy has a strong bias. It warns the hearer not to take up the fight against an enemy with his/her own hands.

In much the same way, the speaker of Ps 23:1–4 has adopted this mind-set and will follow a good path in accordance with divine ordinances, which implies that he will refrain from harming his enemies in v. 5a. Rather than becoming active himself, he commits himself to trust in Yahweh and to live up to the ideal of an individual who does not actively seek strife. The imagery in Ps 23:2–3 suggests a passive attitude on the part of the speaker, who is under Yahweh's guidance. The metaphor of grazing in the "pastures/entrenchments of justice" (v. 3b) includes the speaker's self-understanding as being led rather than engaging in conflict or encouraging another person to attack an enemy. Verses 2–3 paint a landscape that invites the speaker to settle down: "to cause (him) to lie down" (v. 2a), to rest by the "waters of rest" (v. 2b), and to dwell in the "entrenchments of justice" (v. 3b).

The imagery of vv. 2–3 as a whole contrasts starkly with the metaphors of wandering in the shadows of death and the threat of evil that follow (v. 4ab) and now take on richer meaning. Verse 4 describes the transitory process of walking (*ʾēlēk*) through a valley (*bĕgê*). In this process, the speaker does not claim any activity besides walking righteously through the valley. He refrains from active engagement with threatening forces along the way. This passive attitude of finding oneself under guidance leaves all protective activity to Yahweh.

The speaker's passivity is a telling point that is implied in the metaphor of God as a shepherd in Psalm 23, and it leads to an additional consideration: while the speaker remains passive as he wan-

ders through the valley of death shadows, Yahweh's guiding and protecting rod symbolizes his royal authority and power in the conflict with the forces of death (v. 4a) and evil (v. 4b). The shepherd metaphor designates Yahweh as the divine ruler or king who intervenes for the threatened speaker in the conflict with unnamed opponents. Ps 23:4 uses unique phrasing to condense Yahweh's defensive activity into the binary pair "rod and staff" and the verb "to comfort." Any actual fight undertaken to rescue the speaker is lacking. In his journey, the speaker in Psalm 23 proceeds under Yahweh's guidance from the peaceful areas of settlement (vv. 2–3) along treacherous paths to the meal at the table set up in front of his now-vanquished opponent in v. 5. The speaker adopts a general attitude of complete trust in Yahweh, who resolves conflicts between individual enemies. The surprising end result is that the speaker feasts "in front of his enemies" without having previously participated in a fight—merely through trusting in Yahweh.

In light of the speaker's passivity, the nature of the enemies is striking. The only term used to designate the enemies, *ṣōrĕrāi*, "my opponents" (v. 5), can be applied to a collective.[30] Implicitly, the enemies cause "evil" (v. 4b), and, one may assume, they are also responsible

30. *Ṣōrĕrāî*, "my opponents," is derived from the intransitive verb listed in lexicons as *ṣrr* II (33 times Qal, 1 time Piel [Josh 9:4], and 11 times Hiphil), which is mainly used in Deuteronomy–2 Kings and in Psalms. The form *ṣrr* for political-military enemies appears in Exod 23:22; Isa 11:13 (between Ephraim and Judah); Ps 74:4, 23 in the temple; here used for "Yahweh's enemies." Haman appears as enemy of the Jews in Esth 3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24. The short form *ṣār* typically designates national, political, or military enemies: Ps 74:10, 44:11; Isa 63:18 as destroyers of the sanctuary. Ps 60:13/108:13; 78:42, 61; 81:15; 106:7–12 with the Egyptians as enemies in vv. 10–11 and 107:2, 105:24, 136:24; also Lam 1:5, 10, 17; 2:4; 4:12; Num 24:8; Deut 32:27; 33:7; also Gen 14:20. Examples of private enemies are the enemies of David in 2 Sam 24:13//1 Chr 21:12, Ps 89:24. In the psalms of the individual: Pss 3:2; 27:2, 12 (as false witnesses); 112:7–8; 119:139, 157; Job 6:23; external violence: Job 16:9 (cf. H. Ringgren, "צר II," *TWAT* 6:1124–26). Forms derived from the root *ṣrr* I, supposedly with the meaning "spatial narrowness," are used 9 times in their transitive form; the noun *ṣār* I, "narrowness," is used 15 times—6 times in Job, 4 times in Isaiah, 3 times in the Psalms, 1 Sam 2:32, and Esth 7:4. The adjective is used 5 times, and it is used in a number of text-critically complicated instances—namely, 1 Sam 2:32; Isa 30:20, 63:9; Job 36:16, 36:19, 41:7; Esth 7:4; and Prov 24:10 (H. J. Fabry, "צר I," *TWAT* 6:1114).

Personal enemies in the Psalms derive from *ṣrr* II in the form of *ṣōrēr* in Pss 6:8, 7:5 (LXX: plural), 31:12, 42:11, 69:20, 143:12, 10:5; cf. also Amos 5:12, Ps 8:3; compare the form *ṣārâ* (possibly an abstract noun, "enmity"): Pss 54:9, 138:7, and 143:11.

for the "death shadow" that threatens the speaker (v. 4a). The only powers that bridle the enemies' activities are Yahweh's rod and his scepter in v. 4b. The collective overtones as designations for enemies are not surprising.

Given the brief style of v. 4d, the binary pair "rod/staff" along with the reference to Yahweh's consolation are critical for understanding the metaphor. In general, the rod and staff are signs of royal power that signify the king's ability to fight off enemies. The terminology for Yahweh's signs of authority and power enhances the collective aspects.

Besides a scepter or a rod in general,[31] *šebet* can also designate a teacher's rod that serves as a means to educate an individual. This less-common, derived use of the rod in authoritative mediation refers to the teaching of law. This mediation could refer to a public act between two individuals who were opposed to each other in a conflict. Such mediation was relevant in the case of enforced conflict resolution between two enemies. As a sign of his authority and in order to enforce his interpretation of a case, a teacher or an authoritative figure such as a father could use a rod. For instance, in the context of a discourse about personal hatred, when both opponents confronted each other violently, Prov 10:13 states: "On the lips of one who has understanding, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of one who lacks sense." In this context, derived from the more prominent designation of the rod as royal emblem, it serves as a means to enforce a lawful teaching or ruling in legal cases. This was especially necessary when one party would not accept the suggestion of a mediator.[32]

31. It is used 189 times with the meaning "stick, staff, rod"; and used for the shepherd's staff in Lev 27:32; it provides rest from the enemies as a collective in 2 Sam 7:14; it is a token of the power of Egypt, Zech 10:11; and is used as a weapon in 2 Sam 23:21; of God, Isa 10:5; of the Messiah, 11:14; as a tool in Isa 28:27; 143 times it is used for the tribes, specifically the tribes of Israel, such as in Gen 49:16.

32. The Hiphil participle of the verb *ysr* can adopt the meaning "teaching/mediation": Prov 5:12; 6:23; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:5, 10, 32. In the case of a reproach, the mediator could use a rod to reinforce his ruling/teaching, as is the case in Prov 3:11, where it is used for Yahweh's teaching/mediation. The combination of a reproach with physical strikes/slaying (*nkh*) is also found in Jer 2:30, 5:3; and Prov 23:13; see above. Another example is Yahweh's slaying of the people through an enemy in Jer 30:14. See, on the meaning of teaching/reproaching, R. D. Branson, "יסר," *TWAT* 3:694–95.

This sort of teaching in conflict resolution was necessary, as was drastically illustrated by the reinforcement of the conflict resolution of children by strokes with a stick, as Prov 23:13–14 demonstrates: "Do not withhold teaching (*mûsār*) from your children; if you beat them with a rod (*baššēbet*), they will not die. If you beat them with the rod, you will save their lives from Sheol." In the context of teaching and education, the rod refers to the teacher's authority: "Those who spare the rod hate their children, but those who love them are diligent to discipline them" (Prov 13:24).

In a sequence of sayings that refer in part to dispute settlement (Prov 22:8, 10), Prov 22:15 states: "Folly is bound up in the heart of a boy, but the rod of discipline (*šēbet mûsār*) drives it far away."[33] Deuteronomic writings take up this concept of parental education through the rod: "I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use (*bĕšēbet ʾănāšîm*), with blows inflicted by human beings."[34]

Because the rod can, in addition to its primary use as a symbol of royal authority, also be used as a pedagogical instrument to enhance the effects of teaching, one can assume that this overtone may also inform Psalm 23, where the speaker relies on Yahweh's role as a mediator between him and his enemies to establish justice in the face of the enemies' aggression. Used in this sense, the metaphor of the rod buttresses the understanding of vv. 2–3 as a reference to both individual aspects of teaching and Israel's experiences as a collective.

Likewise, the second sign of Yahweh's authority can be used in collective and individual contexts. *Mišʿenet* designates a rod as a sign of authority[35]—indicating, for instance, political authority in 2 Kgs 18:21/Isa 36:6. In Ezek 29:6, the "staff of reed" designates the treacherous nature of Egypt's support for Israel. The rod can also designate a cane used as a support in old age and, in the description of a legal case, the crutch needed to walk after having been injured

33. Proverbs sees the use of the rod in the context of discipline and the teaching of children; cf. Prov 29:15: "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by a neglected child." Another natural target of education is the fool; cf. Prov 26:3: "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools (*kĕsîlîm*)."

34. 2 Sam 7:14. See also the rod as a metaphor for a dominating power in Isa 14:29: "Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken, for from the root of the snake will come forth an adder, and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent."

35. Num 21:18; Judg 6:21; 2 Kgs 4:29, 31.

in a quarrel.[36] Together with the connotations of *šebet* as the teacher's rod, in the context of Psalm 23, the rod may best be interpreted as a symbol of Yahweh's superiority and authority in adjudicating legal cases.

This aspect of Yahweh's teaching and ruling in a case of law is most likely also at the heart of what is translated "consolation." Conventionally rendered "to comfort/to console," *nḥm*, Piel implies Yahweh's action in favor of the speaker, and it is vital to his success on both a national and personal level. For instance, the consolation of the ruins is the "redemption" of Zion (*gāʾal*, Isa 52:9) that is brought about by Yahweh and ends the national catastrophe. Isa 12:1 implies that the consolation means the end of Yahweh's anger.[37] In alluding to the consolation of those who mourn, Isa 61:2 refers to Yahweh's revenge and the liberation of captives.

Another case in point is "to speak to the heart of" in Isa 40:1, which refers to an undeniable change of mind by the enemy, who no longer intends to attack Zion. In Ezek 16:54 (parallel to *ṣdq*, Piel in vv. 51, 52), "to console" takes on the meaning "to make appear just" in a conflict settlement. In psalms of the individual, the speaker cannot find a true "helper/consoler" (Piel participle) against insults and social discrimination (Ps 69:20). In distress from enemy attacks (Ps 71:10–11, 13) and from troubles and calamities (71:20), the supplicant prays for the restoration of his honor and for restoration all around (Ps 71:21). In a confrontation with private enemies who hate the supplicant, Yahweh's help changes the supplicant's life. Consolation is, therefore, the experience of not being abandoned but, instead, receiving active help: "Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame, because you, Yahweh, have helped me (*ʿăzārtanî*) and comforted me" (Ps 86:17).[38]

36. Zech 8:4, Exod 21:18–19.

37. See other examples that refer to a change of situation: in Isa 49:13 and 52:9, his people will experience consolation; in Zech 1:17, Zion experiences consolation. In Isa 51:12, the people should not fear any human enemy.

38. Additional examples include Ps 119:76 (the consolation describes the change in a situation of distress, i.e., after having been humbled, vv. 71, 75). Ps 119:82 refers to a situation of distress and the hope of salvation (cf. v. 81). Active changes are expected and have or have not taken place in Isa 54:11 and 66:13. Lam 2:1–10 sees Yahweh in the role of punishing Zion; vv. 15–29 describe the attitudes of those passing by and the enemies. Verses 13–14 reflect on actual consolation through active change: "What could I liken you to that would console you . . . ?" See also the Piel participle in Lam 1:2, 9, 16, 17, and 21. Typically, the king is in the role of the more powerful individual, so he can act as a consoler according to Job 29:25. See H. Simian-Yofre, "נחם," *TWAT* 5:366–83.

Thus, Yahweh's consolation with a rod and staff relates to a situation of distress and accusation caused by "evil" and fatal assaults in the "valley of death" (v. 4b). Yahweh ends the distress through his authoritative action. At the same time, the exposure to threats leads the supplicant into "entrenchments of justice"—that is, on the figurative paths of procedural justice and righteousness. It is then up to Yahweh to act in his royal role as a shepherd by using his rod to exercise justice and thus end the distress of his supplicant. The end of the supplicant's distress leads in Psalm 23 along the path to a meal that Yahweh prepares in the face of unspecified enemies.

5. The Meal Scene in Psalm 23

Psalm 23 ends with Yahweh's activity of preparing a meal[39] at a table in the face of the enemies.[40] The speaker describes himself as anointed,[41] evoking an attitude of triumph over his enemies. With this meal in v. 5, Psalm 23 moves away from the theme of the first section, vv. 1–4. Ps 23:1–4 focuses on Yahweh's deliverance and on the supplicant's profession of trust in the steadfast shepherd, vv. 1a, 4c. These verses allude to experiences of deliverance that contain collective overtones, such as, for instance, Judah's renewal after the exile. The shepherd provides protection from death-threatening evil (v. 4ab). Psalm 23 suggests that the individual remains passive within the "enclosures of righteousness" and leaves to Yahweh any attempt to exercise justice or revenge.

In the logic of Ps 23:1–5, those who trust in Yahweh's protection against any threat ultimately become anointed, honored guests at

39. The root *ʿrk* for the preparation of a table refers to a festive meal, not to a meal for the poor. See Isa 21:5 referring to Babylon; also 65:11; Ezek 23:41, Ps 78:19, and Prov 9:2.

40. On the icon of the table in Psalm 23, see comparable depictions of tables collected by Peter Riede, "'Du bereitest vor mir einen Tisch': Zum Tischmotiv in den Psalmen 23 und 69," in *Schöpfung und Lebenswelt: Studien zur Theologie und Anthropologie des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlag, 2009) 151–65. Riede adduces an Early Dynastic seal (ED II) and a scene from an eighth-century ivory pyxis from Nimrud. On the privilege of using tables, see Friedhelm Hartenstein, "'Brote' und 'Tisch des Angesichts': Zur Logik symbolischer Kommunikation im Tempelritual," in *"Einen Altar von Erde mache mir-": Festschrift für Diethelm Conrad zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (ed. J. F. Diehl, R. Heitzenröder, and M. Witte: Kamen. Spenner, 2003) 107–27 (here, p. 115).

41. Tracing back the origins of the rite of anointing is beyond the scope of this paper. It has no Egyptian parallels; see Othmar Keel, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: Am Beispiel der Psalmen* (4th ed.; Zurich: Benziger / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984) 234–37.

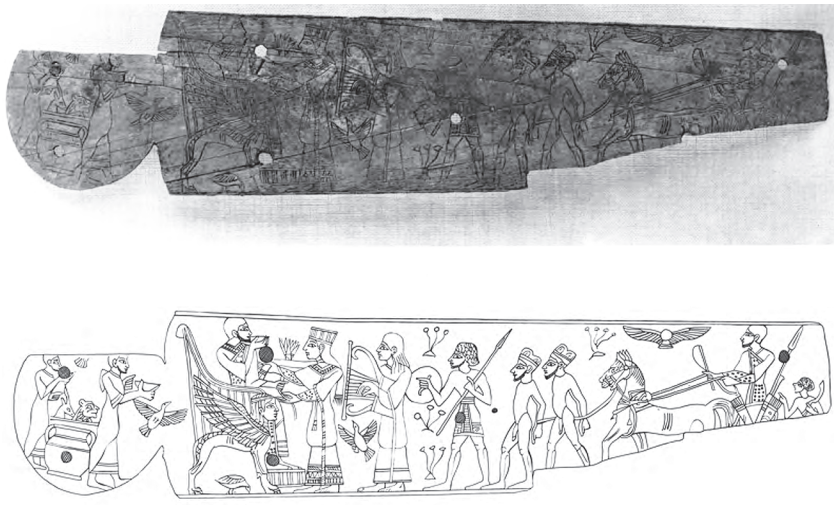

Fig. 1. A king on a throne with female musician, receiving captives and soldiers. Ivory from Megiddo, LBA; Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem. Reproduced after G. Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories* (OIP 52; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1939).

a prepared table. Following this logic of the psalm, in v. 6a, individuals who put their trust in Yahweh's protection also anticipate being "chased" by "goodness" and by "covenantal help" (v. 6a). They dwell in the sphere of the sanctuary. Verse 6b thus connects the experience of covenantal help with the location of the temple. In the logical flow of Ps 23:1–5, the meal functions as a reward for the supplicant's trust in Yahweh. The concluding statement, v. 6b, adds the notion of a perpetual stay in the temple. Based on Psalm 23, one can highlight two aspects of the meal. First, the clause "in the face of my enemies" hints at a potential victory banquet. Second, v. 6b adds the aspect of the supplicant's perpetual stay in the temple.

In light of the unique form of Psalm 23 as a song of trust, instead of searching for analogies in the Psalms, I first look at three iconographic witnesses of meals. These depictions of meal scenes follow widespread patterns.[42] Therefore, the highly conventional depictions offer interpretive help in addition to the scattered references to meals in the psalms of the individual. After considering how these iconographic witnesses may potentially inform the interpretation of

42. For meals in iconography, see among many others, Keel, ibid., 174–77, 307–8.

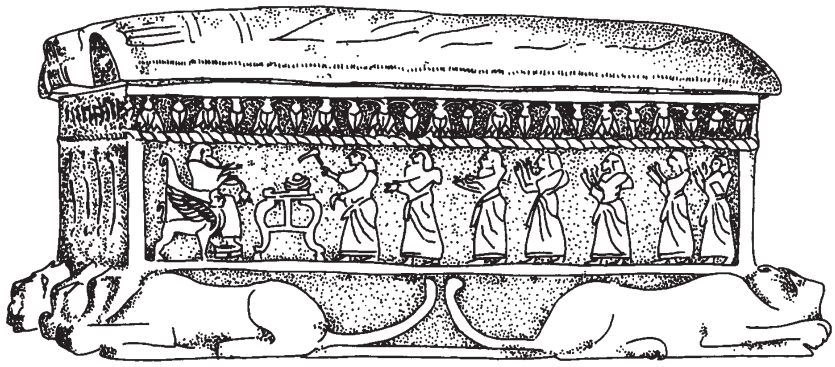

Fig. 2. Ahirom sarcophagus from Byblos. Meal scene with seated king, table; after Manfred Weippert, "Metall und Metallbearbeitung und Sarkophag, Urne, Ossuar," in *Biblisches Real Lexikon* (2nd ed.; ed. Kurt Galling; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1977) 219–24 and 269–76; illustration no. 71:1; reproduced courtesy of Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen.

the meal in Ps 23:5, I delineate in a redaction-critical analysis the nature of the meal in Ps 23:5 in comparison with the meal in Ps 22:23–27.

I consider two depictions of what could be called a victorious royal banquet in the presence of enemies (figs. 1 and 3). The iconographic conception of the scene in fig. 2 shows a deceased king on his throne. This meal scene is carved on a sarcophagus, and thus, the meal is embedded in a funerary context. I consider how the iconographies of the funerary and royal victory banquet enable us to delineate more precisely the religious-historical and cultural roots of the meal in Ps 23:5.

Carved in a Late Bronze Age ivory from Megiddo,[43] figure 1, a banquet scene, shows a feasting anthropomorphic figure in the elaborate gear of an official, seated on an elevated throne with a drinking cup. He faces a female, while a cupbearer and a food-bearing attendant serve him from behind his throne. The composition of this scene largely follows the pattern of the audience scene. The specific occasion for this audience is the soldiers' presentation of enemies. The seated figure on the throne receives two bound captives. They are led by one soldier on foot and another soldier on a chariot. Also, the seated figure holds a drinking bowl, and the cupbearer as a

43. From Megiddo Stratum IX; see G. Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories* (OIP 52; Chicago: Oriental Institute: 1939) pl. 4:2.

motif functions as a symbol of a meal.[44] The juxtaposition of (1) the cup and the cupbearer representing the banquet character of the meal with (2) the enemies facing the feasting, enthroned figure as they are led toward the throne are the main two elements that relate this depiction to the imagery in Ps 23:5.

Another audience scene of a seated anthropomorphic figure shown with a drinking vessel is a relief carved in the sarcophagus of the deceased King Ahirom of Byblos (fig. 2). The main scene shows him seated in front of a table with bread and a bowl arranged in front of him. An anthropomorphic figure in a long dress in front of him holds a fan in one hand.[45] Six other beings follow him: the second and third bring flat (drinking?) bowls, and the last four figures raise their forearms (in a gesture of veneration or greeting?).[46] While this audience scene in front of a king may potentially allude to a victory banquet, any sign of a defeated enemy is lacking. The fact that this scene, rich in details, is engraved on a sarcophagus is a strong hint that we should interpret the audience of the feasting king in a funerary context; however, the precise ritual and cultic implications of a meal for the dead are beyond the scope of this essay.

The scene of a feasting anthropomorphic figure seated on a throne is found on 9 Syro-Hittite mortuary steles. Generally speaking, they confirm the funerary context of the royal meal on the Ahirom sarcophagus. One recently unearthed Syro-Hittite mortuary stele from eighth-century B.C.E. Zincirli, Turkey, has an inscription.[47] This mortuary stele of Katumuwa, an official of Panamuwa II of Sam'al, shows the official in front of a table with bread and other food.[48] In

44. A similar scene is found on an ivory from *Tell el Far'ah*, dated to the Late Bronze Age; see Sir William M. F. Petrie, *Beth-Peleth (Tell Fara) I–II* (London: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1930–32) pl. 55. The figure on the Megiddo ivory is also shown seated at a table on another ivory from Megiddo: Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories*, pl. 32:160. Note three examples of comparable scenes on seals from Late Bronze Age Ugarit–Ras Shamra in Dominik Bonatz, *Das syro-hethitische Grabdenkmal: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung einer neuen Bildgattung in der Eisenzeit im nordsyrisch-südostanatolischen Raum* (Mainz: von Zabern: 2000) 56–57.

45. In his other hand, he holds an object in the shape of a horseshoe.

46. The relief on the sarcophagus is in Middle Syrian style and was dated to 1250–1150 B.C.E.; see Winfried Orthmann, ed., *Der Alte Orient* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1975) 14:484. For a dating of the sarcophagus to the tenth century B.C.E. on paleographical and stylistic grounds, see Bonatz, *Grabdenkmal*, 62.

47. Bonatz's examples of mortuary steles in chap. 3.2 have no inscriptions, (see ibid., 13).

48. The mortuary stele is dated around 735 B.C.E. and was excavated by the Neubauer Expedition in July 2008; see J. David Schloen and Amir S. Fink, "New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Sam'al) and the Discovery

addition to these 9 witnesses of individuals, roughly 50 Syro-Hittite mortuary steles with scenes of feasting figures have been found from the tenth to eighth centuries B.C.E. A phenomenological study of the mortuary memorials with depictions of anthropomorphic individuals distinguishes three subtypes.[49] On the mortuary steles, the scenes with depictions of a table represent one subgroup, either showing one seated anthropomorphic figure in front of a banquet table or two seated anthropomorphic figures with a banquet table. The composition remains essentially the same.[50]

With regard to the actual meal scene, the banquet scene as an act of serving both beverages and food can be condensed into the act of drinking, which the depiction of the cup embodies alone.[51] In order to locate the origin of the scenes on the Syro-Hittite mortuary steles that appear in the short time span of the tenth to eighth centuries B.C.E., we will find it useful to trace the composition's origin.[52] A similar scene appears on the Ahirom sarcophagus, which might be the earliest depiction, but it remains unclear whether the genre's core scene—an anthropomorphic figure seated at a table with food—is related to the (victory) banquet of the king who is receiving an audience found on the sarcophagus of Ahirom.[53]

The major compositional difference between the banquet with audience and the mortuary steles is the latters' condensation of the complex icon into a depiction of one (or two) anthropomorphic figures. The details can vary; scenes of a seated feasting king or god in a royal role can also include a subordinate in the role of the cupbearer.[54] In the tradition of the audience scene, the sarcophagus of

of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," *BASOR* 356 (2009) 1–13. A more extensive consideration is found in Eudora J. Struble and Virginia Rimmer Herrmann, "An Eternal Feast at Sam'al: The New Iron Age Mortuary Stele from Zincirli in Context," *BASOR* 356 (2009) 15–49.

49. Bonatz (*Grabdenkmal*, 24–46) distinguishes the three groups phenomenologically as (1) statuaries with standing figures, (2) statuaries with sitting figures, and (3) mortuary relief steles.

50. Ibid., figs. C 12–C 55, C 60.

51. Frank Pinnock, "Considerations on the 'Banquet Theme' in the Figurative Art of Mesopotamia and Syria," in *Drinking in Ancient Societies: History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near East* (ed. L. Milano; History of the Ancient Near East Studies 6; Padua: Sargon, 1994) 15–26 (here, p. 24).

52. Bonatz (*Grabdenkmal*, 3) defines the scene as a depiction of either only one individual or an individual who was accompanied by a smaller attendant.

53. Ibid., 34–36: Speisetischszenen, Stelenbildtyp 2a.

54. A stele from Ugarit–Ras Shamra (middle Syrian period, thirteenth century B.C.E.) depicts the bearded deity seated on a throne with horns and a Hatef-crown, holding a *w*-shaped object, possibly a cup. The subordinate holds a rod

Fig. 3. "Garden Banquet of Assurbanipal," BM 124920. © Trustees of the British Museum. Reproduced with permission.

Ahirom represents the deceased ruler in a meal scene, and the mortuary steles condense this image into a single deceased official in a meal scene, omitting the procession of the subordinates.

While some think that the meal scene of the deceased Ahirom and the scenes of seated officials in front of a table from the Syro-Hittite mortuary steles should be seen as two distinct types of scenes,[55] the shared funerary context creates a connecting link between the two. Thus it is plausible that the mostly uninscribed mortuary steles (on which a seated figure is holding a cup before a pile of flat bread combined with a fish or duck) borrow from and condense the composition on the sarcophagus of Ahirom into the main scene.[56] The context of a meal for the dead in the presence of the gods is further buttressed by the Katumuwa stele's site in a room that was seemingly remodeled as a shrine before the stele was brought in, supposedly as part of a funerary installation.[57] The similarities suggest that both

in his right hand and a jar in his left hand. See this figure in K. Kohlmeyer and Eva Strommenger, eds., *Land des Baal—Syrien: Forum der Völker und Kulturen* (Mainz: von Zabern: 1982) 146.

55. Peter Altmann, *Festive Meals in Ancient Israel: Deuteronomy's Identity Politics in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context* (BZAW 424; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011) 80 with n. 23, in reference to F. Pinnock, "Considerations," 24.

56. The connection has been suggested by Bonatz, *Grabdenkmal*, 62. It was picked up by Seth L. Sanders, "The Appetites of the Dead: West Semitic Linguistic and Ritual Aspects of the Katamuwa Stele," *BASOR* 369 (2013) 35–55 (here, pp. 45, 47).

57. Sanders, "Appetites," 48; cf. Struble and Herrmann, "Feast," 33–39; the room was 3 × 3.75 m.

icons do pertain in some way to a meal of a deceased king or an official. They could thus be developmentally connected to each other.

Related to the tradition of the mortuary steles that condense the more complex composition of a royal meal in the context of an audience is a third scene. It comes from Ashurbanipal's palace in Nineveh (see fig. 3).[58] Reclining on a couch, the king drinks, while his wife is seated upright on a throne to his left. The scene depicts lyre players, fan bearers, and food bearers in the foreground, while the background consists of a garden scene with trees and birds. It also portrays an arched royal bow on a table as a token of the king's readiness for duty at any moment. More elements in the composition signify the royal ability to exercise his rule. And, as an even stronger symbol of his royal power than the bow, the scene is arranged so that the king literally feasts "in the face of his enemy": the head of the Elamite King Teuman hangs from a tree, and Elamite princes surround Ashurbanipal as his servants during the meal.[59] The depiction is relevant to the understanding of the meal in Psalm 23 because it shows the king literally feasting in front of his enemies—a tradition that continued after the Late Bronze Age ivory of Megiddo. The difference is that in Ashurbanipal's garden scene the enemies take up the role of the king's servants. This banquet scene with its unique details and setting thus illustrates the development of feasting and of meals, and it demonstrates in particular the specifically royal character of the feasting individual.

58. This scene from the end of the Neo-Assyrian kingdom varies the older typical compositions of banquet scenes in its details—for instance, by introducing the reclined couch. See also earlier scenes of Neo-Assyrian origin with seated figures, either single or paired individuals, and additional scenes of Neo-Assyrian provenance that introduce an isolated banquet scene in the larger narrative of a conquest, as is also the case in this garden scene (cf. Bonatz, *Grabdenkmale*, 63). It has been suggested that the scene with servants rather than tribute bearers mirrors the change in political development toward a more aggressive imperial policy of the Neo-Assyrian Empire beginning with Tiglathpileser III (745–727 B.C.E.). Unlike the earlier practice in the vassal and provincial system, the Assyrians would now immediately reduce the lands of their conquered vassals to provinces. Consequently, at the end of this development under Ashurbanipal, there are no longer vassals bringing tribute but, instead, Elamite princes serving the king (Altmann, *Festive Meals*, 91–92, with reference to Jürgen Bär, *Der assyrische Tribut und seine Darstellung: Eine Untersuchung zur imperialen Ideologie im neuassyrischen Reich* [Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996] 230–31). On a religious-historical discussion of the scene, see also Altmann, *Festive Meals*, 90 n. 43.

59. See Altmann, *Festive Meals*, 89, with n. 42, in reference to M. C. Root.

With regard to the feast in Psalm 23, the two distinct forms of meal scenes in the iconographic tradition are relevant and helpful in explaining its background. First, the icon of the feasting individual on a throne is deeply rooted in the tradition of the royal victory meal in front of enemies. Second, the tradition of a deceased king's perpetual feast at the table is another prominent icon. In variants, one finds this scene attested on the Ahirom sarcophagus and on mortuary steles. Most relevant to the understanding of Psalm 23 is this scene's prominent place in funerary contexts. As a backdrop to Psalm 23, this image elucidates why Psalm 23 combines the motif of feasting in v. 5 with the petitioner's permanent dwelling in Yahweh's Temple in v. 6.

In addition to these obvious similarities with iconographic traditions, Psalm 23 shows characteristic variations on the image of feasting. In the royal victory banquet, with symbolic weapons, the king demonstrates his own power and glory, by means of which he overcomes his enemies. In contrast to this iconic celebration of royal power, the individual who feasts in the royal tradition in Psalm 23 is aware of his dependence on Yahweh's rod and staff. The shepherd-sheep metaphor in vv. 1–4 elaborates on the theme of fundamental reliance on Yahweh. Again as a variation on the mortuary steles' theme of the individual's perpetual dwelling, Ps 23:6 alludes to this motif by referring to a permanent dwelling in Yahweh's Temple.

The examination of both funerary and royal victory meals elucidates the thematic backdrop and the meaning of the meal in Ps 23:5. I now consider how this meal scene relates to other meal allusions in the subcollection of the Psalter that comprises Psalm 15–24.

6. Redaction Criticism

Ps 23:1–4 expresses trust in Yahweh's authority and leading at a point in time when the speaker is vulnerable due to a conflict with his enemies. The speaker's dwelling in the "entrenchments of justice" (*bĕmaʿgĕlê-ṣedeq*, v. 3) refers to his law-abiding attitude, of which Yahweh as a shepherd is an impressive example. The speaker himself refrains from engaging in violent action or harming his enemy.[60] Read in light of his enemies' threat, this means he is putting his trust in Yahweh's authority as a king who resolves the conflict, using a rod and staff as tokens of his authority. The metaphor of the shepherd used in conjunction with other idioms and metaphors in Psalm 23

60. See the context of conflict resolution between two private enemies who are quarreling with each other in Exod 21:18–19.

thus hints at the concept of complete trust. The theme of Psalm 23, as a song of confidence, with neither plea nor lament, is trust in Yahweh.

A sideways glance at comparable psalms supports this interpretation. A similar attitude of a speaker appears in psalms of revenge, such as Ps 69:13–18; 109:21, 26–28. The speaker pleads for Yahweh's help rather than taking up his own cause and engaging in battle. In the midst of all his anxiety about enemies threatening to take his life, the speaker of Psalm 23 takes refuge in Yahweh's authority over potential enemies. The bold statement of confidence in Yahweh's guidance leaves no room for the speaker's own activity. According to his self-understanding, he is passively led to places of rest, to the renewal of life, along with the parallel "right path" for the sake of Yahweh's name in v. 3. The speaker's statement of confidence in v. 4, "I do not fear evil," is an expression of his trust in Yahweh's future activity against his enemies.

As has been noted, individual songs of thanksgiving typically exult in their certitude that what the speaker is praying for has already been achieved.[61] This concept of absolute confidence in Yahweh and in his provision for the welfare of the speaker culminates in the preparation of a meal in the face of his enemies. In the logic of the statement of confidence, the speaker anticipates that the enemies are already defeated and that he can face them when Yahweh prepares a victory banquet before him.

The above-mentioned thoughts inform a redaction-critical reading of the meal in Psalm 23. Within the first Davidic psalter, Psalms 3–41, the group that consists of Psalms 15–24 as a potentially older subcollection is of particular interest.[62] Individual psalms in this collection are obviously much older, and parts of them can be dated back to the preexilic period; in its current form, the subcollection is part of the psalter from the era of the Second Temple. Thus, in their final

61. Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 232–33.

62. See, among others, Pierre Auffret, *La sagesse a bâti sa maison: Études des structures littéraires dans l'Ancien Testament et spécialement dans les psaumes* (Fribourg: Presses Universitaires / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1982) 407–38; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, " 'Wer darf hinaufziehen zum Berg JHWHS?' Zur Redaktionsgeschichte und Theolgoie der Psalmengruppe 15–24)," in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel* (ed. G. Braulik, W. Gross, and S. McEvenue; Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 1993) 166–82; Patrick D. Miller, "Kingship, Torah, Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15–24," in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung* (ed. K. Seybold and E. Zenger; Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 1993) 127–42.

form under consideration here, Psalms 15–24 reveal something of the identity of Israel in Second Temple Judaism. Three royal songs, Psalms 18, 20, and 21,[63] form its thematic older core. A redaction during the Second Temple period inserted Psalms 26 and 23, and (as Hossfeld and Zenger suggest) also inserted an expanded version of Psalm 19.[64] While Psalm 19 is the center of what has been called the palindromic composition of Psalms 15–24,[65] together with an older hymn of creation and of the Torah (19:2–11), the redaction's addition of Ps 19:12–14, 15 integrates Psalm 19 into the collection of chaps. 15–24 as its center. It may well be the latest section.[66]

Various sequential readings of the Psalms 15–24 collection have been suggested.[67] P. D. Miller summarizes the theme of the subcollection, including its collective overtones, as the belief that "obedience to torah and trust in Yahweh's guidance and deliverance are the way of Israel and the way of kingship."[68] M. Leuenberger takes this further and suggests an overarching theme of moral-ethical justice as the center of the composition. The frame of Psalms 15 and 24 highlights this theme: justice with regard to the cult is moral-ethical justice. The centerpiece of the composition, Psalm 19, also focuses on this moral-ethical justice, describing its effect in v. 10b, which the psalm focuses on as the reliability of Yahweh's Torah (19:10b).[69]

In a remarkable twist in the second half of the collection Psalms 15–24, this theme of moral-ethical justice disembogues into a presentation of Yahweh as king in Pss 22:4; 23, to whose reign (*mĕlûkâ*, 22:29) food is essential. Leuenberger reads Pss 22:27; 23:1–3, 5–6; and 16:5 (my cup; cf. 24:5) as realizations of Yahweh's kingship. Meals and the provision of food would be an essential aspect of this kingship. Meals and feasting would (in this sequen-

63. Their themes are thought to allude to the preexilic period, but they are the result of complex literary development.

64. Hossfeld and Zenger, "Wer darf hinaufziehen," 179–80.

65. William P. Brown, " 'Here Comes the Sun!' The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; Leuven: Peeters, 2010) 259–77 (here, pp. 261–62).

66. Hossfeld and Zenger, "Wer darf hinaufziehen," 169, 179; Brown, " 'Here Comes the Sun!' " 261–62.

67. A review of all possible critical readings is beyond the scope of this paper.

68. Miller, "Kingship," 140–41.

69. Martin Leuenberger, *Konzeptionen des Königtum Gottes im Psalter: Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Redaktion der theokratischen Bücher IV–V im Psalter* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2004) 99–100.

tial, redaction-critical reading) be a subtheme of Yahweh's kingship. Seen within the larger collection Psalms 3–41*, Psalms 15–24 represent the theme of Yahweh's just order in the world, while the following subcollection of Psalms 25–34 presents Yahweh's position of power in action. The framing subcollection of Psalms 3–14 applies traditions of particularly royal honor to diverse situations of any individual in distress. The concluding subcollection of Psalms 35–41 speaks of the installation of justice for the poor against sin in the form of enemies and disease.[70]

Rather than reading the subcollection primarily in light of its implications for Yahweh's kingship, I follow the more formal analysis of Hossfeld and Zenger and read 15–24 foremost as a collection of prayers. This implies that I relate the various attitudes of prayer in the individual psalms to each other by understanding them as sequentially arranged.[71] In this sequential reading, the movement of the prayer begins after Psalm 15 with a song of trust in Psalm 16 and comes to an end in Psalm 23 with this same theme of trust. One of the semantic links between Psalm 23 and the Psalms 15–24 collection is the metaphor of the "paths of righteousness" in Pss 17:4–5 and 23:3.[72] The two psalms of trust share an allusion to the speaker's cup in Pss 16:5 and 23:5. The composition of Psalms 15–24, speaking in general terms, increases the importance of the temple and the cult.

When considering the sequential reading and the redaction-critical work in Psalm 23, we will find it helpful to understand the meal scene of Ps 23:5–6 in its former contexts. One of the contexts in which this scene is embedded is the subcollection of Psalms 15–24. Ps 22:26 is a reference within this collection that picks up on the theme of the meal. Psalm 22 is juxtaposed with Ps 23:5 and provides us with an opportunity to probe the contribution of redaction-critical perspectives to the understanding of the meal in Psalm 23.

I have pointed out the immediate thematic context of the meal in Ps 23:5–6, the shepherd-sheep imagery in vv. 1–4. The connection between the shepherd-sheep and meal images is that they both symbolize the particular attitude of the individual: refraining from

70. Ibid., 102.

71. Miller, "Kingship," 133.

72. This is the part of the lament in Psalm 17 that functions as the motivation for Yahweh's response. In Ps 23:3, it is the expression of confidence. The connection between these two verses becomes even clearer due to the fact that these two instances are the only uses of *maʿgāl* in the Psalter. See Miller, "Kingship," 136.

harming an enemy and trusting in divine defense against any form of evil or threat to life. This is relevant to the interpretation of the meal in the neighboring Psalm 22. In order to understand the possible relations of the psalms to each other within the Psalter, one must first consider the structure of Psalm 22.

Psalm 22 is itself a complex composition. The first part, vv. 2–22, addresses Yahweh (vv. 2–3) in seven stanzas of originally three lines each. Verse 22bβ closes this part with the speaker's acknowledgment of aid. The second part, Ps 22:23–32, is a psalm of thanksgiving. It comprises v. 23, a vow to praise Yahweh; vv. 24–26, a summoning of the assembly to join in; v. 27, an invitation to join the meal; and vv. 28–32, a summons to universal praise of Yahweh.[73]

One of the ways that the final form of Psalm 22 differs from Psalm 23 is that 22 refers in more depth to the enemies and their threat, which it compares to wild animals who threaten the supplicant in 22:13–22abα. The much more complex Psalm 22 (with its sequence of seven stanzas of lament and song of thanksgiving)[74] and Psalm 23 are, however, alike in their parallel broader outlines, which move from one individual's threatening situation to the same individual's salvation. In Psalm 23, the situation of distress is only indirectly mentioned, as Yahweh guides the speaker in his distress. Therefore, in its form, Psalm 23 remains entirely a song of an individual, while Psalm 22 highlights the importance of the community that gathers on the occasion of an individual's rescue (Ps 22:23–27).

The relationship between Psalms 22 and 23 becomes more complex when one takes into account the compositional development of Psalm 22, though I can only consider it briefly here. The hypothetical earliest literary layer is vv. 2–3, 7–23. This is an ideal example of a typical psalm of lament or individual complaint song. After an initial plea for help, a two-part lament follows in vv. 7–11 and vv. 13–19, and the two parts frame the plea, which appears in v. 12.

This psalm does not relate to cultic issues, but 22:4–6 seem to allude specifically to the sphere of the cult in the use of "holy" and the reference to Yahweh as being "enthroned on the cherubim." Thus vv. 4–6 were probably inserted by those who used the Psalter and who identify themselves as the supplicants—the "in group."

73. This outline follows Seybold, *Die Psalmen*, 97–99.

74. Alternatively, a sequel of two laments appears in vv. 4–12, vv. 13–19 (see Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 144). On the song of thanksgiving, see the typical allusions to an offering meal in the song of thanksgiving of the individual, for instance Ps 66:13–16. The praise and the communication of salvation to others in public are shared by Ps 22:23 and 66:16.

They speak of themselves in the first-person plural ("we"). Verses 4–6 indeed redefine the entire psalm,[75] as does the formula of *todah* ("thanksgiving") in v. 27 that mentions a *todah*-meal for the community in response to the answered prayer and the speaker's rescue (as already alluded to in 22:22bβ). In summary, the earliest layer of vv. 2–3 and vv. 7–23 was reworked by inserting vv. 4–6 and vv. 24–27.

Verses 28–32 clearly add universal facets and, hence, form yet another addition.[76] Focusing on the *todah*-meal in Psalm 22 in its current form, I break it down into three diachronically developed parts: first, on the level of the earliest layer, a self-obligation or vow in v. 23; second, the invocation of the community to join the praise in vv. 24–27; and, finally, the exhortation to universal praise that addresses the ends of the earth in vv. 28–32. The three stages gradually enlarge the circle of the audience. The earliest layer of Psalm 22 addresses the promise of praise in v. 23 to the brothers (i.e., relatives) and the "assembly" (i.e., friends) as an audience. The second layer (vv. 24–27) addresses a wider audience of Yahweh-fearers, presumably a cultic gathering of the community. Finally, in the latest layer, the psalm calls upon the ends of the earth to praise Yahweh. The second layer shifts the self-identification of the speaker. He now identifies himself as poor (v. 25) within the great assembly of the poor (v. 27).[77] Apart from this self-identification as "poor" (v. 25), he also considers himself to be a "seeker" of Yahweh[78] who hopes to eat and to be sated (v. 27).

On the basis of this hypothetical diachronic development from a smaller circle to a larger circle of Yahweh-seekers who self-identify as the poor, the implications of reading Psalm 22 together with Psalm 23 change. The addition of 22:24–27 changes the reading of Psalm 23 in that it introduces the characteristic theology of the poor. Read

75. Hossfeld and Zenger, "Wer darf hinaufziehen," 180. The collective reinterpretation of the Psalms is beyond the scope of this essay. See, among others, the convincing model for Psalms 120–34 developed by Klaus Seybold, *Die Wallfahrtspsalmen: Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Psalm 120–134* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978). On Psalm 22, see recently Marko Marttila, *Collective Reinterpretation in the Psalms* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 105, following the model of G. Vanoni, with 22:4–6, 24–27 as expansion 1 and vv. 28–29, 31b–32 as expansion 2.

76. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen*, 145.

77. Other additions are the royal human in Ps 18:26–32, now seen together with his ethical behavior according to the extension of Ps 15:4–5aβ; Hossfeld and Zenger, "Wer darf hinaufziehen," 177. The other addition to Psalm 22 is in vv. 24–27.

78. Ibid., 180.

after Ps 22:27, Ps 23:3 now picks up on this aspect, which has been announced as the praise of the name of Yahweh by those who fear Yahweh. Read in light of Psalm 22, Psalm 23 appears as a prayer by an individual who identifies with the poor.

Besides this shift in the meaning of the meal in Psalm 23, some other intertextual connections require attention. For instance, Ps 16:10 prepares for Ps 23:3 in its use of the metaphor of the way and the idea of Yahweh's presence with the speaker (16:8, 23:4), together with the reference to Yahweh's goods (16:2, 11; 23:6). Furthermore, the above-mentioned shift toward the poor as participants in the meal changes the conception of the composition of Psalms *15–24. The meal in Ps 23:5–6 is now understood as the realization of the feeding of the poor and hungry that Psalm 22 announces. Ps 23:5–6 implies much more than eating and satisfaction on a personal level; the verses elevate the speaker's social position. The poor take on the role of the king in the banquet scenes.

The dimensions of a theology of the poor in Psalm 23 within the larger composition of Psalms 15–24 become more fully evident when the meal in Psalm 23 is seen in relation to (1) the opening question of the subcollection of Psalms 15–24: Ps 15:1b, "Who may dwell on your holy mountain (Yahweh)?"; and (2) the insertion of the piety of the poor in Ps 22:4–6, 24–27. Read from this point of view, Ps 23:6 makes the meal available to the poor, and it also extends the meal into an undefined future. "Length of days" is an expression that can be seen in analogy with the funerary context of the sarcophagus of Ahirom and the mortuary steles. In reference to the image of a perpetual meal in the funerary context, Ps 23:6 can be understood as a hint at an extension of the meal. The meaning oscillates between the supplicant's present and his existence in an undefined future in which he will be remembered as a participant in a meal. The introductory song of trust in the collection Psalm 15–24, which is Psalm 16 (esp. vv. 10–11), shares this perspective of the length of days found in Ps 23:6.

If the above-mentioned overtones of the collective experiences in Ps 23:1–4 are correct, this interpretation of the ongoing feast after death for the poor implies just such a collective understanding. The speaker's "I" in Psalm 23 implicitly transcends a purely individual meaning. In the final form, it is the collective voice of the downcast that now reminisces about certain salvific experiences of Israel's collective past for itself. The speaker identifies with a group that, while undergoing mortal attacks, will remain in the tracks or entrench-

ments of justice and whose only hope is that Yahweh will provide space for a peaceful settlement in green pastures.

As has been suggested above, the imagery of the shepherd implicitly promotes the idea of Yahweh as the only defense for the pious poor against their enemies. Read with the poor as participants in the meal, this particular group claims Yahweh's guidance to the "waters of restfulness" and to a place at the royal table, where individuals savor the full cup like a victorious king in front of his enemies. But the collection Psalms 15–24 does not limit the banquet motif to Psalm 23. It appropriates the motif that signifies a banquet, the cup, in its first song of trust: "Yahweh is my chosen portion and my cup," in Ps 16:9.[79] Ps 23:5 takes up this image. A redaction-critical reading may even go beyond the subcollection Psalms 15–24 and point to the meal within the first Davidic psalter of Psalms 3–41. In the context of a Davidic rereading of the psalter, not only does the meal in Ps 23:5–6 reverberate for the pious poor in an experience of Israel's salvation, but it echoes a later reception of stories about David's salvation (Psalm 18) in Second Temple Judaism.

Naturally, this brief reading of Psalm 23 in the context of the subcollection Psalms 15–24 offers only one redaction-critical attempt. Other hypothetical models of the development of the collection Psalms 15–24 and additional aspects of meals in the Psalms could be considered. However, even this limited reading of Psalm 23 adds remarkable contours to the interpretation of the meal—in particular, its shift from a purely individual banquet to a meal with collective dimensions and its distinctive sociohistorical location as a meal for the poor.

79. In the Psalter, only here and in Ps 23:5 does a speaker use the idiom "my cup." While the mere repetition would not be indicative of a deliberate relation between both sentences in its current context within the subcollection of Psalms 15–24, it buttresses other references to Psalm 16 that appear in Psalm 23.

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